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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

FOR the first time in history the British Government has conceded the right of a pirate to stop British ships from proceeding by sea on their legitimate business. "For practical reasons, and in view of the risks against which it is at present impossible to protect them," the Cabinet decided last Sunday to warn British ships consigned to Bilbao with cargoes of foodstuffs not to attempt to enter that port. Mr. Baldwin's announcement of the decision was accompanied by a declaration that H.M. Government cannot recognise Franco's belligerent rights or "tolerate any interference with British ships at sea." But, whatever insistence the Government may lay on *de jure* rights, the effect of their policy is to recognise *de facto* a blockade of Bilbao by the insurgents. Food, which is not covered by any non-intervention agreement, is desperately needed—how desperately, may be judged from the letter we publish this week from the Rev. D. R. Davies, who is a member of the Church Delegation which has just returned from the Basque country. Yet the Government decrees that British foodships shall no longer go to Bilbao. This, as Opposition speakers rightly urged in the House of Commons debate, is intervention on behalf of Franco. "Abyssinia over again," added Sir Archibald Sinclair. It is precisely what Franco sought to achieve by his threats; the German and Italian press is jubilant.

The Freedom of the Seas

The Government's defence of its policy was unconvincing. Sir John Simon informed Parliament on Wednesday that, according to reports from the senior British naval officer in the Bay of Biscay, the insurgent blockade of Bilbao "seemed likely to be effective": the approaches to the port had been mined, and unless convoyed by superior naval forces, accompanied by minesweepers, British ships entering Bilbao would be in grave danger of being sunk by rebel mines, aircraft or gun-fire. In the interests of safety they had therefore been warned not to approach the Basque coast, just as shipping had been advised not to try to make Ceuta and Melilla when those ports were (partially) blocked by Spanish Government vessels last summer. We have no means of judging the effectiveness of Franco's blockade. The Basque Government claim that under shelter of coast fortresses their mine-sweepers have removed all mines laid within territorial waters, and the British Navy has been apparently instructed to afford full protection to shipping outside those limits. The question of principle, however, is not in doubt. To the Opposition's contentions—that the indiscriminate sowing of mines is a breach of international law, that food is not contraband, and that Franco has no belligerent rights—Mr. Eden replied that by non-intervention the British Government meant "the avoidance of all complications which might prejudice good relations between nations." This is

carrying pacifism to remarkable lengths. Franco and his Fascist allies can apparently close the whole of the seas round Spain to shipping laden with legitimate cargoes consigned to ports in the control of a lawfully constituted Government which happens to be a loyal member of the League. The British Navy will not be used.

This Week's Fighting

The week's fighting on land has been severe but inconclusive. On the Bilbao front the rebel advance has been held up on the line of the hills twenty miles from the city; the defending forces appear to have received air reinforcements and to have counter-attacked with partial success. Outside Madrid the Government troops, backed by increasingly effective artillery support, have launched successive attacks on Franco's positions round the Casa del Campo, with the object of cutting the tenuous communications of the rebels in the University City. The high ground of the Carro de Aguila, which virtually commands this sector, seems still to be in the hands of the rebels, who claim to have inflicted heavy casualties on the Loyalist side. Farther south, towards Cordova, the Government offensive continues, and there has been heavy fighting round the mining district of Peñarroya, again without a conclusive result. On the Aragon and Guadalajara fronts the Government claims minor successes. The impression conveyed by the news is that the initiative is passing definitely into the Government's hands. This sounds well but may be deceptive. For the salient feature of modern land warfare is the superiority of the defensive, and it remains to be seen whether the Government can risk the terrible toll of casualties which a large scale attack over a wide front is likely to entail.

The Rexist Defeat

M. van Zeeland's victory over M. Degrelle in the Brussels by-election was a good deal bigger than most people expected; and the result is a nasty blow for the Rexist movement. Undoubtedly the Prime Minister owed a part of his majority to the support of the Catholic hierarchy, which outweighed M. Degrelle's assertions that he, and he alone, was the true champion of the Faith. But, even apart from this, the Rexists have probably been losing ground of late, despite their alliance with the Flemish Nationalists. If the Belgians want to escape from their military obligations to France—as they have now in effect done—they do not desire to leap the other way right into Herr Hitler's arms. M. van Zeeland's coalition of Socialists and moderate Catholics and Liberals probably represents fairly well the predominant state of feeling in the country. It is likely to hold together as long as the Rexists look dangerous, and perhaps as long as Belgium's international status remains precariously poised.

The Status of Egypt

As a preliminary to Egypt's entry into the League of Nations as an independent State member, the Egyptian Government is now conferring at Montreux with the representatives of twelve "interested" countries over the steps to be taken to modify and ultimately abolish the Capitulations. By choosing the path of negotiation, rather than the example of unilateral denunciation set by post-war Turkey, Nahas Pasha has deserved to have sympathetic treatment accorded to his proposals; and, save in one particular, the course of the Conference should be smooth. By common consent the Capitulations, as such, are dead. With them goes the invidious right of subjects of the Capitulatory Powers to be tried for offences by their own Consular Courts. Equally, with the proviso that the Egyptian Government might reasonably be asked to give friendly assurances with regard to discriminatory taxation, there can be no case for attempting to prolong the so-called General Assembly's humiliating power to decide that Egyptian legislation is inapplicable to foreign subjects. For a transitional period, until the Native Courts acquire full powers of jurisdiction and Egypt's sovereignty is thus completed, Nahas Pasha has proposed that all cases in which foreigners are concerned should come before the Mixed Courts, staffed by both Egyptian and foreign judges. It is a reasonable proposal, but difficulty is caused by the demand, sponsored chiefly by the French delegate, that for this purpose "protected" subjects of foreign Powers (e.g., Algerian Arabs) should be counted as "foreigners." If the Egyptian Premier is forced by hard bargaining to make too many concessions, he may have serious trouble on his hands at home.

The Still Vexed Frontier

The Faquir of Ipi bids fair to cause the Government of India considerable trouble. He has inflamed Wazir and Mahsud malcontents over a large area in South Waziristan, and a raiding *lashkar* succeeded last week-end in inflicting heavy casualties (including seven British officers killed) on a supply convoy ambushed on the way up from Jandola to Wana. The upshot is apparently to be a punitive expedition—a division of infantry backed by bombing aircraft—and, since the majority of the Mahsud tribesmen are reported to be "well disposed," retribution may be meted out with no great difficulty from the military standpoint. From the point of view of administration, however, a large question remains. Eighteen years ago we fought a major campaign in Waziristan; after its conclusion, pacification was to be made permanent by the construction of strategic roads and the opening up of trading communications. The idea was sound: the Wazir turns to fighting partly because he likes it, mainly because he lacks money and women. But though the roads are there, Waziristan remains a bitterly impoverished territory. Only greater economic well-being will prevent recurrences of such violent outbreaks.

Five to Four

The Wagner Labor Relations Act was passed two years ago; but it has been practically inoperative because everyone confidently expected its disallowance by the United States Supreme Court. The Court, however, has now upheld it, in a series of decisions on cases affecting a number of different industries. The most important judgments were given by five judges against four—the change of side by Mr. Justice Roberts being once again the determining factor. Opponents of Mr. Roosevelt's plan for the reform of the Supreme Court are, of course, now arguing that reform is quite unnecessary, on the ground that the Court has demonstrated its deference to public opinion. But the President, with plenty more difficult cases still to come, is hardly likely to accept this view; he may, of course, accept a compromise, but it now looks as if he will be able to carry

the Senate all the way with him if he wishes. American Labour, or at any rate the C.I.O., is naturally jubilant, and is getting ready for the big fight with Mr. Henry Ford, who is still announcing that all Trade Unions are criminals, and that never, never will he have anything to do with them. But the C.I.O. is not yet ready to challenge Mr. Ford. Meanwhile, having won its battle against Chrysler, it will go on to smaller victories, in preparation for the big struggle with Fordism that lies ahead.

The Miners' Ballot

The Mineworkers' Federation is taking its national ballot upon the situation in Nottinghamshire. Since the rejection of the impossible terms of amalgamation with the Spencer Union negotiated under the auspices of the Ministry of Mines, the hopes of a solution by agreement have vanished—especially as at Harworth the return to single shift working means that there are no jobs for most of the men now on strike except at the expense of the Spencerites who have remained at work. It seems to be certain that the ballot will give a large majority in favour of empowering the Mineworkers' Federation to call a national strike in support of its right to organise the Notts coalfield. It is hardly to be doubted that the Spencer Union would collapse at once but for the support given to it by the owners; and it is possible that miners who belong, by virtual compulsion, to the Spencer Union may join the strike in substantial numbers if it is called. The M.F.G.B., however, clearly does not want a national strike on this local issue if it can find any other way of safeguarding Trade Union rights. The ballot will authorise, but not require it, to call a stoppage: the hope is that the threat to strike may lead to more successful efforts to settle the dispute.

Air Raid Precautions

The Government's scheme of air-raid precautions is hanging fire for two reasons. First, the local authorities, speaking through their Associations, object to footing the bill; they demand that the total cost shall be borne by the central authority. Secondly, there is general and, we believe, well-founded scepticism about the efficiency of the Government's scheme. Its proposals have been carefully examined by a group of Cambridge scientific experts. Among other objections they report that the standard British gas masks, now being produced, it is said, at a rate of about half a million a week, are extremely poor—much less efficient, for instance, than the gas mask provided for the civil population in France. The French precautions, elaborated under greater pressure and in more democratic conditions, seem indeed to be far more efficient in many respects. No serious effort has been made in this country to provide adequately ventilated underground shelter, and the impression is created that the Government which does not mind how much is spent on offensive weapons and which does nothing to prevent profiteering in armaments is willing to sustain the "morale" of the civilian population by quite deceptive promises of security against air attack. Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd, the Under-Secretary to the Home Office, has just paid a visit of inquiry to Paris, and it is understood that either he himself or his representative will attend a conference on Air Raid Precautions and Civilian Defence, which has been organised by the National Peace Council, the Peace Pledge Union and the U.D.C. The Conference will be held in Besant Hall, Gloucester Place, W.1, on April 24th and 25th.

Labour Party and Socialist League

The Labour Party has issued another manifesto dealing further with the expulsion of the Socialist League and reiterating the declaration of war on all members who venture to collaborate with the extreme Left. The chief purpose of this latest document seems to be the discrediting of the Socialist League and the Unity Campaign by asserting that they are financed by large sums of money, drawn from undisclosed sources. Dr. Dalton, in a speech last week-end, spoke of the movement as financed by a few rich men—presumably a hit at Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Russell Strauss, whose wealth was not, as far as we know, a matter for complaint by Dr. Dalton when they subscribed to Labour Party funds. We are informed, however, that in fact the entire funds of the Unity campaign have been met by collections at public meetings. The executive's manifesto says nothing of rich men—only of "large sums of money"—which reads like a *Daily Mail* slap at Moscow. Positively, the executive, after reiterating that membership of the Socialist League will, after June 1st, no longer be compatible with membership of the Labour Party, calls on all its followers to rally round the new Short Programme. The Socialist League for its part has not yet decided on its course of action. It may decide against immediate dissolution and await the verdict of the Labour Party Conference in October. This course involves the disadvantage that its members will be faced with the alternative of resigning from it before June 1st or being excluded from the Labour Party before the annual conference.

Voluntary Sterilisation

Sir Kingsley Wood made it plain to the House on Tuesday that the Government will do nothing to implement the recommendations of the Brock Committee and legalise the voluntary sterilisation of mental defectives until "public opinion has developed," or in other words until the opposition of the Catholic Church and other religious bodies has been overcome. We agree with those who argue that compulsory powers of sterilisation might be abused, and that in some cases defectives can scarcely be said to be mentally capable of exercising free choice. But reasonable safeguards to secure the voluntary principle are not impracticable, and with this proviso the case for permitting sterilisation is overwhelming. Vesectomy in modern surgical practice is (at least for males) a trivial operation, which interferes in no way with the health or normal sexual life of the subject. Many doctors are already prepared to carry it out at a patient's request if they can safeguard themselves by being able to certify it as "eugenically imperative," though as an aesthetically satisfactory (albeit irrevocable) method of birth-control it is almost certainly illegal. This is an absurd state of affairs, and the campaign for legalisation in the case of defectives who ask for sterilisation and are certified to be *compos mentis* in this particular request must ultimately prevail over the churches' obstruction.

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STRIKES AND PROFITEERING

Is the successful strike wave in France and the United States to be paralleled in this country? With industry booming, except in the depressed areas, and very high profits being made by firms directly or indirectly engaged in the work of rearmament, the Trade Unions are undoubtedly faced with a much more favourable opportunity for improving the conditions of the workers. But the Trade Union machine is, almost of necessity, slow-moving; it is the penalty of establishing a regular procedure for collective bargaining that some considerable period must elapse between a decision to take a step forward and the possibility of strike action if the employers oppose the Trade Union claims. Usually, indeed, it is the employers' object to make the machinery of bargaining grind as slowly as possible; historically it has been used far more often for negotiating improvements than degradations of the conditions of labour.

The Trade Unions, then, even when their leaders have decided that the time has come to make a move, are apt to move slowly and circumspectly. They cannot push hard without exposing themselves to the charge of violating agreements to which they are parties, and which they are in the habit of calling upon the employers to observe. It is natural, in such a situation, for some of the members of the Trade Unions, who do not feel themselves so directly parties to the agreements made by their leaders, to become impatient at the slow *tempo* of events, and to watch with dismay their opportunities slipping by. They are conscious that the chance is there; and they are not at all sure how long it will last. They want action here and now, and in certain cases they proceed to take matters into their own hands.

Sometimes, as in the present strike at Parkhead, the position is complicated by a real difference of opinion about what can be done without violation of agreements or Trade Union rules. The Parkhead firm only joined the Engineering Employers' Federation at the eleventh hour, when the dispute was already in prospect; and the applicability of the bargaining machinery established between the Federation and the A.E.U. is therefore in doubt. Secondly, the A.E.U. National Executive holds that the Clyde District Committee ought to have taken a ballot before authorising the strike, and therefore withholds its sanction—so that the strikers get no strike pay beyond what can be supplied from local funds. Such doubtful constitutional points always crop up at times of labour unrest; and national executives, eager to confirm discipline and safeguard Trade Union funds, are apt to be sticklers for correct procedure.

It is, indeed, a significant and interesting fact that in no one of the great strike waves of the past sixty years has the initiative come from the established leaders of Trade Unionism. Such movements—in 1872, in 1889, in 1910–11, and in 1919–20—have always been pioneered either by unofficial action or by uprisings among previously unorganised bodies of workers, and have usually met with a good deal of disapproval among official leaders. The strike wave last year in France was not led by the C.G.T., at any rate until after the event. The strike wave in America to-day is certainly not being led by the A.F. of L. Sometimes, of course, when the movement has gathered momentum, the official leaders join in, or are drawn in by mass pressure from their members. But they rarely begin it, and often oppose it.

The two economic conditions most calculated to produce a wave of spontaneous strikes are the consciousness of rising prices and the consciousness of unchecked profiteering. In Great Britain to-day, both these conditions exist to an increasing extent. Prices have been rising for some time past; the workers are now becoming keenly aware of the consequent increases in the cost of living. At the same time profits, above all in the industries concerned with rearmament, have undoubtedly soared very high; and there is no sign that the Government is doing a single thing to implement Mr. Baldwin's promises that rearmament should not be allowed to lead to excess profit-making.

In these circumstances, growing unrest in the factories engaged upon the production of war supplies is a matter of course. The skilled men are very well aware that there is already a shortage, comparable with that which existed during the Great War, though on a smaller scale, of many kinds of highly skilled labour. They ask themselves why, if the steel-makers are allowed to make unregulated profits out of their monopoly, skilled workmen should not turn to account their monopoly of scarce types of labour. They ask the more insistently, because they have passed through a period of years during which a redundant supply of labour has enabled employers to whittle away a good many established Trade Union customs. They want a bit of their own back, and they do not feel like standing on points of punctilio.

In the Clyde area there is now a widespread strike of apprentices. The conditions of apprenticeship have been greatly worsened in recent years; there has been a growing tendency to use apprentices as a source of cheap labour instead of taking pains to give them all-round experience in the shops. The growth of specialisation has encouraged this tendency, and made it difficult for the apprentice in a big mass-production factory to get a reasonable all-round training. At the same time, apprentices' wages have been lowered in many establishments—for there are, in effect, no standard rates. These are the causes which lie behind the Clyde strike, and it is an appreciation of the reality of the grievances that has induced the Trade Unions locally to announce a one-day protest strike and a further suspension of overtime in the apprentices' support.

These events on the Clyde, taken in conjunction with the miners' threat of a national strike, are probably the precursors of a coming wave of labour unrest, which may, if it once gathers momentum, speedily sweep over the new industries so far largely untouched by the Trade Union appeal. If the Government wants to check this movement, there are two things it can do. It can, by reversing its policy of high protection and reverting to a more liberal attitude towards international trade, at any rate retard the rise in prices. And it can stop profiteering by nationalising the arms industry, or at least set up an effective system of control over costs and prices. If this hits the speculators, it would serve them right. But, in view of the Government's record, we do not suppose there is the smallest chance that it will do either of these things. Yet, if it will not do them, it cannot blame the workers if they seize their excellent chance of joining in the game.

MR. ROOSEVELT'S CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

IN 1803 the United States Supreme Court claimed the right to nullify an Act of Congress on the ground that it was in conflict with the constitution. Not long after making this large claim of power, one of the Justices laid down a limitation. "It is," wrote Justice Washington, "but a decent respect due to the wisdom, the integrity and the patriotism of the legislative body, by which any law is passed, to presume in favour of its validity until its violation of the constitution is proved beyond all reasonable doubt."

For a time the Supreme Court accepted this moderate view of its authority. In fact, the Court did not declare an Act of Congress unconstitutional until the year 1857. And one might have hoped that the first use of this power would also be the last, since the result was disastrous. Thinking to settle the long quarrel over the spread of slavery in the territories, the Supreme Court announced in 1857 that the Federal Government had no authority to interfere with slavery in the territories. From this it followed that the famous Missouri Compromise Act of 1820 was unconstitutional. The Court hoped this decision would remove the question once and for all from politics. It did, with the unhappy result that the only place left to argue was on the field of battle.

Undeterred by this mischievous start, the Supreme Court has used with increasing frequency its power to declare laws unconstitutional. During the last few years the Court has turned down almost every important piece of New Deal legislation which it had to review, with the exception of the Act reducing the gold content of the dollar. Meanwhile, in three successive elections, the American people have endorsed the New Deal more and more heartily.

What appears to have happened is that during the past two generations the Supreme Court has slowly come to see itself, not merely as a judicial body bound by the wise limitations laid down by Justice Washington, but as the guardian of political and economic truth. This is a larger claim than was made in 1803, and a more sinister. In a changing world, the Court has seemed to feel that its most important function is to remain immobile. As a result of this dubious ambition, the majority of the Court appears to have reversed Justice Washington's rule and to have presumed in favour of a New Deal law's unconstitutionality until its adherence to the constitution has been proved beyond all hope of doubt.

With the Court in such a mood a constitutional crisis has for some time seemed inevitable. Only Providence could avoid it; but in spite of the great age of more than half the justices Providence has not seen fit to take a hand. Last June the crisis was brought into the open when the Court (with four dissenters among its nine members) killed a New York State Minimum Wage Act, on the ground that to prevent women from working for wages that destroy health and morals is to deprive those women of "property" without "due process of law." After that, it was only a question of waiting until the autumn elections, to make sure the people were still strongly behind the New Deal. If they were, the overdue reckoning with the Supreme Court must come.

There is now a large majority in America which is in favour of doing something to ease the tension between the Supreme Court and the rest of the Government; the quarrel is over the question of what to do. There appear to be three main possibilities: the first is to change the wording of certain critical phrases in the constitution; the second is to change the powers of the Court; the third is to change the personnel of the Court. If each of these methods be considered in turn, it will become clear why the President has chosen the third.

Any attempt to follow the first suggestion, and to relieve the present crisis by changing the constitution, must deal with one or more of three trouble-making phrases: "interstate commerce," "due process of law," and "general welfare." Most of the controversial decisions, throughout the Supreme Court's history, have involved one or another of these phrases. (Incidentally, most of those same controversial, and vitally important, decisions have been in favour of great corporate wealth, and have worked to the marked disadvantage of men of small property or of none.)

It is probable that the men who framed the constitution intended these difficult phrases to be vague. If so, they showed their wisdom. For when phrases of such ambiguity have to be interpreted it is necessary for the interpreter to use his creative imagination and not merely his powers of logical deduction. This is as it should be. If a written constitution is to endure in a shifting world it must have subtlety and pliability. It must not be too rigid. It must be subject to progressive interpretation—witness the American constitution, which has been reinterpreted from generation to generation, keeping in touch (or at least in sight) of the changes in the physical and economic sphere.

There are strong reasons, therefore, for not trying to "clarify" the constitution by tying it down to rigid definitions. If it loses its pliability it loses its chance to grow, which means its chance to remain alive. But by the same token, if it is to grow by means of interpretation and reinterpretation, it must be interpreted by men who are themselves alive.

Another reason for opposing constitutional amendment as the way out of the present tangle is that no clarifying amendment has much chance of being adopted within the next few years. In the first place, there are half-a-dozen suggested amendments before the Congress, and still others before the people. The author of each suggestion has a strong though baseless pride in what he has done. It will not be easy to agree upon a single amendment, and having agreed it will not be possible to secure adoption without long delay. (A majority in one house of thirteen State legislatures is enough to block an amendment. The legislatures of the thirteen least populous States only represent 5 per cent. of the American people.)

Mr. Roosevelt, therefore, rejects the clarifying amendment as both dubious and dilatory.

The second suggestion is to change the powers of the Supreme Court, either denying it the right to review Acts of Congress, or else limiting its powers of review more or less drastically. Among those who favour limitation of the review power, some ask for a referendum by the people whenever the Supreme Court throws out an Act of Congress. Others suggest that two-thirds, or three-fourths, of Congress should have power to override the veto of the Court; others would give such powers to Congress only after an election has intervened between the Court's decision and the Congress's review, etc., etc. The suggestions are legion.

As in the case of a clarifying change, it would be hard to agree on the wording of an amendment diminishing the Court's power, and hard to secure the adoption of such an amendment even after agreement had been reached. Furthermore, the President and his advisers are in doubt as to whether it is wise to restrict the powers of the Court. Those powers have been abused and made unpopular; but there are grounds for thinking they might be used in such a way as to make the constitution a more subtle and adaptable document than it has ever been. So the second possibility has also been rejected, in the belief that it is probably unwise and certainly slow.

There remains the proposal to change the personnel of the Court. This is in keeping with American constitutional traditions, similar changes having been made three times before when the Court was too far out of touch with majority demands.

It is an interesting fact that even Mr. Roosevelt's conservative opponents recognise that recent Supreme Court decisions have endangered public respect for the form of government. The extent of that danger is suggested by the number of people—from Mr. Walter Lippmann on the Right to Senator Wheeler on the Left—who are to-day asking to

have the constitution altered. Mr. Roosevelt takes more conservative ground; he suggests leaving the constitution alone and altering the justices.

It is charged that this is a high-handed and undemocratic proposal, since it will give the New Deal a free hand without waiting on the long-drawn-out process of amendment. But is there anything necessarily undemocratic about acting before it is too late? And is there anything high-handed about a proposal which was certain to be debated for months in the Congress and throughout the country?

It is charged that "packing the Court" is a dangerous precedent to hand down to a future reactionary executive. But a reactionary executive will either be a do-nothing, like Coolidge, in which case he will not quarrel with his Court, or else he will be a genuine Fascist, in which case no constitutional check will impede him. The one defence against Fascism is to make democracy work, to show that it is not hamstrung, that it is both willing and able to promote justice. The Supreme Court, by preventing reforms that are long overdue, might breed Fascism. It is nonsense to suggest that the Court could quell Fascism by calling it unconstitutional.

Professor Edward S. Corwin, a leading authority on American constitutional history, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that "there is no doubt that a vast part of the New Deal legislation could be sustained by doctrines approved by the Court, and equally reputable if not more reputable than the doctrines the Court used to reject the legislation. . . . If liberal interpretations of the constitution prevail, amendments may not be necessary. Let's give the constitution a chance to function."

There is the whole issue. Shall the New Deal abdicate, shall it tell the people to whom it has made specific promises that it can do nothing, because by mere chance the majority on the Supreme Court is still composed of a group of justices who hold the social philosophy of post-Civil War America? If so, the people may decide that the constitution is a poor affair. They may even decide that democracy, as Mussolini remarked, "stinks." But neither conclusion would be true. The constitution is adequate, if it is given a chance. And it is only a fake democracy that stinks. But if the constitution is made to mean robber-baron *laisser-faire*, if democracy is made to mean the protection of the few against the demand of the many for justice, then neither democracy nor the constitution has a rosy future.

To sum up: it is the Administration's belief, first, that something must be done to free America from the obstructionism of the present Supreme Court; second, that it would be a mistake to attempt a too rigid definition of the ambiguous phrases of the constitution, since there is much virtue in that ambiguity; third, that it might be a mistake to deprive the Supreme Court of its review power; fourth, that the constitution can be preserved, and the Administration freed to keep its promises, by ensuring that a majority of the Supreme Court justices are men whose social and economic philosophy takes into account the century in which they are now all compelled to live.

In judging the President's proposals the following fact should be kept in mind; if, as was to be expected, three or four vacancies had come during Mr. Roosevelt's first term, the Court would now be safely and respectably pro-New Deal and there would be no need for the present quarrel. Where is the wisdom, or the statesmanship, in leaving such important matters to a neglectful Providence?

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A LONDON DIARY

THE publication of Marshal De Bono's *Anno XIIII* (Cresset Press, 12*s.* 6*d.*) is the outstanding political event of this week. I can see no limit to its political repercussions. Educated people have long been accustomed to smile at the crude psychology which sees political opponents as scoundrels; we leave it to the sixteenth-century dramatists to write about Renaissance villains who stab and poison and arrange for massacres for purely selfish ends and without a moment's compunction for their victims. It is a commonplace in twentieth-century England that nations "stagger" into war, that neither side wants it and that even in a bad case like the Boer War, where England was the aggressor, some blame must be attached to both sides and a lot attributed to frayed nerves, misunderstandings and all the rest of it. But De Bono's book is a straightforward, amply documented account of the destruction of a nation and the murder of hundreds of thousands of persons by deliberate, cold-blooded calculation. And the book is by the murderers themselves (Mussolini contributes a preface). There is here nothing left for argument, nothing left to say in extenuation. De Bono went to Abyssinia to report in 1932; and asked for the honour of planning and conducting the war. Mussolini said that he wanted it arranged no later than 1936. There was no quarrel with Abyssinia; De Bono makes it clear that the Abyssinians were always willing to settle any difficulties and give satisfaction, when "incidents" occurred. Therefore Italy had to invent a quarrel. De Bono only regrets that he could not conquer the country by a surprise attack, because foreigners would necessarily notice troops going through the Suez Canal. He describes the difficulties of carrying through the campaign and gives the texts of Mussolini's peremptory orders to speed up and speed up until at length De Bono had to protest and was superseded. It was all completely cold-blooded and deliberate, like a Borgia murder. One is not using the usual hyperbole of politics when one describes Mussolini and De Bono as murderers; that is in sober truth the word which the mother of every Italian who died in Abyssinia, and relatives of every Ethiopian poisoned or shelled in his native mountains, have the right to use.

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The repercussions of this book may be as great in home affairs as they are in foreign. The most die-hard of Conservatives cannot in future deceive himself into believing a word uttered by Mussolini or his allies. For instance, there is the question of the threatened insurgent mine-fields on the Spanish Coast; if the Government accepts Franco's threats at their face value, it is voluntarily deceived. There can be no more doubt about the disgraceful nature of British policy in Abyssinia or in Spain. At a lunch organised by the Five Year Group last Tuesday, I heard Sir Arthur Salter make an admirable speech mainly about domestic policy. About foreign policy he only found it necessary to quote two passages from that morning's review in the *Times* of Marshal De Bono's book:

> It reveals that the Abyssinians were found to be so anxious to avoid war that in the end the Italians had to force it on them. By these compound admissions Marshal De Bono's book makes British apologists for Italy's action look peculiarly silly.

And then

> Fear of sanctions was an additional cause for anxiety; and De Bono shows in what straits the Italians would have been if their supplies of petrol, above all, had been stopped.

What more is there to say?

* * *

Why was I going to this dinner? I hate public dinners; and what would one learn of Mr. Baldwin as one of a thousand guests? Why was I going? Subconsciously I suppose because Mr. Baldwin is retiring and it would be "an occasion." Then I found I had two tickets. I owed someone an apology; I had accidentally accepted both as an individual and as THE

NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. Which place should I occupy? I looked at my companions at the table where I was an individual and hastily decided that the journalists would be much better company. Interesting talk, good food, and excellent wine all at the expense of the F.B.I. Thank you. Lord Hirst's eulogy, and now Mr. Baldwin is speaking. A beautiful voice, that pleasant touch about "growing old gracefully" and that mellow wisdom about the dangers of speed and mechanisation. "Fifty years ago one never heard of a nervous breakdown." His real philosophy this, humane, tolerant, the outlook not of Kipling but of a genial country gentleman. He delighted these prosperous manufacturers and business men. One could safely applaud sentiments so remote from the actualities, just as one could go to church on Sunday and feel better for listening to words that can be forgotten on Monday. What is there in common between Mary Webb and the job of making as much money as quickly as possible out of rearmament? This has always been the anomaly and the utility of Mr. Baldwin—to love the beauty of the Worcestershire countryside and the values of a passing age while cheered to the echo as leader of a Party dominated by men whose function it is to sweep away all that he himself would like to stand for.

* * *

An Englishman who has just returned from the Far East gives me a very interesting account of the obscure events that have followed the kidnapping and escape of General Chiang-Kai-Chek. That story remains impenetrably obscure to me, in spite of the rival theories of experts, some of whom declare that the whole thing was a Japanese plot to embroil the northern command with the Central Government. If so, the plot signally failed. The North-West troops have been moved out to the Tientsin-Pukow railway and into Northern Anwhei, a far richer area than the two North-Western provinces of Shensi and Kansu. These, with the arsenal and railway terminus at Sian, have been handed over to the Communists. Since the Red armies were at the time of the kidnapping incident in effective control of the area, with actual Soviet areas in North Shensi, and with the provincial administration much under Communist influence, this merely amounts to a recognition of the *status quo*. But my friend adds that the Communists have made terms with the Government, and are to be allowed a measure of local autonomy and given a subsidy of 50,000,000 dollars, in return for which they will accept the nominal control of the Central Government and rename their armies as Central Government troops. It will be interesting to see whether they will carry out this policy to the length of allowing foreigners to return to Sian, and the missionaries to their stations. There has certainly been a marked moderation in Communist pronouncements in China, and a call for a united front against the Japanese. On the other hand, the Central Government have chosen the same moment to proclaim a policy of reconciliation with Japan and for a renewal of Fascist propaganda—but this, my friend thinks, may well be only a temporary manoeuvre. In any case, the strategic possibilities of an adequately equipped Red army in the North-West provinces are important. The Red troops and commanders who conducted the march to the North-West are potentially a very formidable force, and their presence on the flank of a Japanese movement into North China or Ninghsia might be decisive. They should be in touch with Sinkiang by the Urumchi bus route, which would permit them to receive a little support from Russia, though it is by no means certain that the Russians would give it. In any case, they are likely to present a formidable obstacle to a Japanese push south or south-west from Manchukuo.

* * *

I have in front of me an illustrated "book for old and young" by one Elvira Bauer. It was published in Germany in time for the Christmas sales. The first edition of 50,000 copies was sold out in a month. I scarcely hope to convey its quality to people who have not seen it. The cover shows a cunning fox and a foul and treacherous Jew, with the caption "Trust no fox on his green heath and no Jew upon his oath!" Inside, the production is like any children's nursery rhyme book except that instead of Little Miss Muffet, Jack Horner, and The Old Man Who Wouldn't Say His Prayers, we have a series of pictures and rhymes contrasting the glorious blonde Nordic with the bestial Jew, who is represented in each brightly coloured picture as a creature scarcely human, with great black hairs all over his face. First we learn that when God made the different races, the Jews were adopted by their father, the Devil, who later introduced them into Germany for Julius Streicher to turn out.

> The Jew from the beginning
> Is a murderer, says Jesus Christ.
> And since the Lord Jesus had to die,
> So did the Lord God know no people
> Which was capable of torturing him to death.
> Therefore he chose the Jews.
> That is why the Jews claim
> To be the chosen people.

The reader is warned that the baptised Jew is only fooling the Christian, for once a Jew, always a Jew. Then there is a cheating Jewish trader, the grasping Jewish lawyer, and the cruel Jewish doctor who experiments on Gentiles in order only to cure Jews. The nastiest picture is of the Jewish butcher.

> A dirty fellow is Mr. Isaac,
> Instead of meat he sells half offal.
> One bit is lying on the floor,
> Another is in the claws of the cat.
> That does not trouble the Jewish butcher,
> For the meat gains in weight like that.
> And one must not forget
> He has not got to eat it himself.

Then there is the beautiful Aryan maiden being seduced by a Yid who offers her jewellery, and an outraged Nordic father shouting at his daughter because she is walking out with a Jew. In contrast, we have a romantic picture of Julius Streicher surrounded by lovely Nordic children who are happy to take his advice and to drive the Jewish children out of their schools and the Jews out of Germany. It is this propaganda of race hatred amongst children which makes one's blood run cold.

> Now it will be nice in the schools,
> For all the Jews must go,
> The big ones and the little ones.
> Cries and whines don't help,
> Nor do rage and anger.
> Out with the Jew brood!

The conclusion is:

> That Jews are not desired.
> The air belongs only to Germans,
> So little Jew, get out!

What will a generation of children brought up in this way be like? How far can one rely on the common rule that children react against their parent's teaching? Not very far, I think, in a country where no alternative case can be stated for the adolescent to think about.

* * *

It will be interesting to see whether the new "book-magazine," *Fact*, can establish itself. It is a novel idea and, apart from its intrinsic merits, valuable as a publishing experiment. The editor of *Fact* is R. W. Postgate; it is to appear monthly and costs sixpence. Each issue is to contain about 100 pages, largely devoted to a single long article or essay—in fact, a small book of about 20,000 words. The bulk of the first issue, published this week, is devoted to a lively study of present tendencies by Mrs. G. D. H. Cole. It is called, rather surprisingly, *The New Economic Revolution*. After that comes an unusually well-informed account of the conditions of hotel waiters and employees by the assistant manager of a Fashionable Hotel. The next book or magazine (call it whichever you like), is to be about colonies and Empire and to be written by Leonard Barnes, one of the ten contributing editors. They also include Lancelot Hogben, Storm

Jameson, Francis Meynell, George Lansbury, Rudolph Messel, Stephen Spender and Calder Marshall.

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A recent picture in the *Daily Express* showed that:

The chimpanzees at Whipsnade now have Coronation mugs at their tea parties and wave the Union Jack with enthusiasm.

But wandering through the Zoo the other day, I heard some one remark that the mandrills had got in first with their patriotic display. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. M. A. Young
All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Mr. Evelyn Waugh, the novelist, who was a war correspondent in that vivid show in Abyssinia.—*Tatler.*

Although I am definitely a party Candidate and am opposed by a Labour nominee, my sympathies and interests cover every class and all shades of political opinion.—Election Address.

I find on looking back in my diaries that I always fall in love on Thursdays. Do you suppose that there is any reason why this should be so?—Letter in *News-Chronicle.*

The Rev. A. F. Cox, vicar of Holy Innocents, Kingsbury, has refused to let the church hall for a dance on the evening of Coronation Day. "I think it is most inappropriate," he said. "We should think of the responsibilities of the King and Queen."—*Evening Standard.*

Mrs. Baldwin was the smartest dressed woman present.—A. Beverley Baxter, M.P., in *Sunday Times.*

I desire to express my gratitude to Almighty God for his many mercies, especially in sparing my life in the railway catastrophe at Petit in Algeria, and for the many privileges I have been allowed to enjoy, including the prolongation of vigour of mind and body well beyond the limit of threescore and ten, and of having been born an Englishman in the reign of the best of English sovereigns in the most interesting and progressive of all periods of the world's history under the most nearly perfect constitution and the most beneficent and highly favoured Empire the world has ever seen.—From a Will, quoted in the *Daily Express.*

But, having seen Soho, there is no need to die, for the cooking, though foreign, is excellent.—*Nottingham Evening Post.*

General Franco is no reactionary. He is about as different as possible from the Fascist with horns and hoofs denounced by our Left-lungers. He is a great gentleman.—J. L. Garvin, in *Observer.*

CZECH AND GERMAN

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN PRAGUE]

THE precarious existence of Czechoslovakia amidst its fire-breathing neighbours continues. Some believe the worst danger was over when the Germans decided not to attack the Czechs last November; others fear that British rearmament is an incentive to Germany to move very soon. On the whole there is a good deal of genuine optimism in the country, though it is sometimes difficult not to confuse the habits induced by living on the edge of catastrophe with a more positive optimism. If the integrity of Czechoslovakia can be saved, it is to President Beneš that salvation will be due. This man has persuaded the pacifist, rationalist Czechs to rearm with enthusiasm. The army, contrary to every probability a few years ago, has become popular, and—still more surprising, perhaps—Dr. Beneš, busy little schoolmaster *par excellence*, has become popular with the Army.

Inside the country the Agrarian Party is the President's most formidable opponent. This represents powerful vested interests, and is strong in the Cabinet and in all branches of the Civil Service. Eternal Agrarian bickerings with the Socialists—for instance, because the Agrarians wish to keep down the consumption of margarine in the interests of butter—sometimes paralyse Cabinet action. Smaller officials are usually members of the Agrarian party, and it is they, often at the instigation of the chauvinist National Union, who have constantly sabotaged the minority laws in the Sudeten country and in Southern Slovakia.

Like many other countries Czechoslovakia is governed through an uneasy co-operation of opposing forces. Yet Dr. Beneš seems always to take the initiative and seize the advantage. He made the Agreement with Russia in spite of the Agrarians. He was elected President almost in spite of them, and proceeded to put in his own nominee to succeed him at the Foreign Office. He won the most competent of the Agrarians over to his side, and now Dr. Hodža and he are engaging upon a tussle with local officialdom in order to get the Minority Agreement of February 20th translated into action.

This Agreement made with the German Activists at a moment of marked economic recovery may prove to be a turning-point in Czechoslovak history if external events do not cut that history short. Hitherto Czechoslovakia's German citizens have not had their due share of Civil Service jobs, partly, it should not be forgotten, because a good many Germans did not know Czech sufficiently well, and partly because a good many Germans have recently been felt to be too sympathetic to racialist and totalitarian conceptions which are in direct contradiction to the political principles of Prague. It will not be possible to turn out Czechs and put in Germans, but Dr. Hodža is willing to increase the total number of officials, and for the time being he intends to appoint more (duly qualified) Germans than Czechs until the proportion has been rectified. Already, and for the first time, two Germans have been appointed to be *Senatspräsidenten* in the Supreme Court.

The February Agreement is also to apply to the Hungarian minority. This includes some 700,000 people (as compared with 3,300,000 Germans) whose rights have, on the other hand, been rather more neglected than those of the Bohemian Germans. Even in the most purely Hungarian villages, for instance, only Slovakian has been visible at station or post office. The proportion of schools to Hungarians is lower than it should be, but in answer to reproaches on this point the Czechs or Slovaks can reply that in Hungary itself there are even less schools, and that, having to start from the extraordinarily backward conditions which Hungary had left behind in Slovakia, it is not to be wondered at if the authorities of the Republic concentrated their efforts upon first providing education in the languages of the new state. To the Magyar complaints that they have tried to denationalise defenceless peasants, the Czechs and Slovaks reply that the policy of Magyarising the Slovaks in pre-war Hungary was something whose effects the new Czechoslovak state would naturally wish to reverse. No doubt de-Magyarising has sometimes been attempted with too much enthusiasm. The revisionism of official Hungary has, on the other hand, forced the Slovakian Magyars to appear irredentist. It is also particularly unfortunate that the local authorities just now appear to be curtailing the periods available for Hungarian plays at the municipal theatres at Bratislava, Košice, and even at Užhorod. Another bureaucratic blunder which irritates the Sudeten Germans is the new proposition for curtailing the freedom of universities; the German University in Prague is particularly sensitive about this.

One of the disquieting features in the situation has been the growing co-operation between the leaders of the German, and the leaders of the Hungarian, opposition. In Bratislava, for instance, the German-speaking wine-growers are followers of Henlein, and ready to make common cause with the discontented Magyars. Both the German and Hungarian oppo-

sitional leaders have uncompromisingly rejected the February Agreement. At Aussig, on February 28th, Henlein himself announced that the Sudeten Germans would be satisfied with nothing but complete autonomy and restitution for all the wrongs in his view suffered at Czech hands since the Peace Settlement. "They should not drive us to desperation," he cried at one moment. This seemed to echo the prophecies of revolt which have been appearing in the Reich-German and semi-official Hungarian press. The likelihood of risings is actually remote; the suggestion is just as irresponsible as that which blames Prague for the strength of Communism in Slovakia, whereas the Czechoslovak police is particularly stern in dealing with Communists in that part of the world.

Now the great difference between the German and the Hungarian problem in Czechoslovakia is that the Germans are an 80 per cent. industrial population and the Hungarians 70 per cent. peasant. It has often been pointed out that the Sudeten Germans, largely depending upon the export of luxury articles as they do, were as badly hit by the slump as any distressed area one can think of. As recently as last October, unemployment in the German districts of Bohemia was three and a half times as great as among the Czechs. To-day, however, a remarkable change is occurring; even in Gablonz, a town long since impoverished by Japanese competition, where glass articles, and especially buttons, beads and brooches, are produced, improvement is visible and cannot be denied. By the beginning of March unemployment was decreasing so much more rapidly among the German than the Czech population as to stand at almost exactly two to one. Eager statisticians have calculated that the proportion will have been equalised before the end of May.

The psychological effect of this development remains to be seen. The Czechoslovak Government and the German Activists, i.e., the democratic German parties which are represented in the Government coalition, believe that Henleinism will lose many supporters; local elections in the autumn will provide the first tangible evidence. Activist political meetings lately have certainly been more successful, while the Henleiners are taking to rowdyism. Disturbances of this kind are interpreted by some people as showing nervousness on the part of the Sudeten German Party, but to others they seem to provide an extension of the Aussig "desperation" threat.

The Agrarians have not been entirely idle while the President and the Premier have been tackling the problems of rearmament and minority administration. The failure to bring the Slovak Autonomists into the Cabinet is attributable to Agrarian intrigues, for the Agrarian Party is strongly anti-Clerical. Under the influence of Hlinka's Autonomist Party, on the other hand, a Slovak village school shows a photograph of the Pope in every classroom, rather more prominently hung than the photographs of Masaryk and Beneš; not only Agrarian Czechs dislike the implication. In the past some Agrarian leaders have given indirect encouragement to Henlein, with whose anti-Russian protests they sympathised. But since the Aussig speech no good Czech, however anti-Communist he may be, can fail to condemn the efforts of Henlein, since the autonomy demand spells to all Czechs the disintegration of the Republic.

All Europe is asking whether Czechoslovakia can continue to avoid the bilateral pact with Germany which the Agrarians advocate. International circumstances have undoubtedly compelled the Government of Prague to give this project more friendly consideration of late. Czechoslovakia still insists upon the maintenance of her agreements with France and with Russia, but she feels that if Germany would agree to a non-aggression and non-intervention pact, the effect, not so much upon the relations of Berlin with Prague, but upon world opinion and upon the state of mind of her German minority, would be worth while.

For some time the relations of Czechoslovakia with the Reich have been very extraordinary. Diplomatically the greatest correctness has been preserved all through the period of the scurrilous press campaign launched by the *Gleichgeschaltet* newspapers of Germany against the Czechoslovaks. Bolshevik indictments have recently been dropped, and the German press has concentrated upon the wrongs of the Sudeten Germans, although it is well known that the Germans in Italy and Hungary are treated far worse. In February the Germans who came to Prague to negotiate a new commercial treaty were particularly friendly—it is true that they wished to be provided with Czechoslovak grain as quickly as possible. A favourable treaty was negotiated by which more Czechoslovak agricultural produce—fats, of course, in particular—were to go to Germany, while Germany increased the facilities for German tourists to visit Czechoslovakia. It has often been pointed out that the Reich has never been willing to do anything to alleviate the export difficulties of the Sudeten Germans, though on other occasions economic are readily sacrificed to political considerations. Apart from the possibility of more German visitors in Carlsbad and Marienbad, the new Treaty does nothing to help Sudeten German industry, whereas the recent commercial treaty between Czechoslovakia and France arranges for something like a 20 per cent. increase of glass and porcelain exports, i.e., from Gablonz and Carlsbad, to France.

Tentative moves have recently been made towards a rapprochement between Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, but on the whole Prague is not inclined to overrate the potentialities involved. The situation has undoubtedly been discussed at the Little Entente meeting at Belgrade. Czechoslovakia's position with regard to Germany is not nearly so favourable as that of Yugoslavia recently was with regard to Italy, but it seems likely that she will get an agreement on Italian-Yugoslav lines if she can. It might be supposed that Germany would soon be compelled to choose between invading Czechoslovakia or coming to terms with her; on the other hand, Hitlerist Germany knows all about nuisance value, and may therefore prefer to prolong the uncertainty of to-day, the curious conflict between the rationalism of Beneš and the mysticism of Hitler.

NOT INSULTED

IN a recent book of reminiscences I read a story about an eminent novelist and myself, which interested me greatly, partly because it referred to me and partly because it was not within a mile of being true. I am not suggesting that the writer of the book invented it, but merely that he must have misunderstood something that he heard or that he heard something that somebody else had misunderstood. He began by praising the novelist as a man who simply could not help being sincere—a man with whom truth will out at all costs. The novelist, it appears, invited me to lunch at his club, and during lunch another member came up and spoke to me in a friendly way, whereupon the novelist, helpless in the grip of his sincerity, insulted me in a sneer of one syllable. In order to prevent misapprehension, I should explain at on e that the word was "Why?" Still it was spoken with such appalling sincerity and was so pregnant with insult that, according to the writer, in a sturdier age there would have been only one answer to it—a smack on the jaw.

How much more dramatic the story would have been if I had actually given the novelist that smack on the jaw, and if the novelist had replied with a characteristically sincere punch on the nose! I might even have achieved my ambition and got into the gossip columns. "SCENE IN CLUBLAND: FAMOUS NOVELIST'S FIGHT WITH GUEST IN PALL MALL." I should have liked that. I should also have been secure of immortality, for the incident would have been bound to appear in the novelist's biography. I might even have had a footnote to myself as the hated guest who once hit the sincere novelist a smack on the jaw.

Now I have often wished to hit somebody a smack on the jaw. The repressed desire to hit somebody a smack on the jaw may have played a larger part in forming my character

than I know. At the same time, I have never had secret designs of the sort on this particular novelist. One reason may be that he is one of the most courteous men alive—a man rather more incapable of being rude to a guest than of robbing a church. He is a man who would not insult a guest even if the guest were an armament-manufacturer. And that is saying a lot, for he detests armament-manufacturers. If he were tried by a jury of those who know him on a charge of having insulted a guest in a club, the jury, I am convinced, would dismiss the charge without waiting to hear the evidence for the defence.

In the first place, they would notice a certain contradiction in the story, and would ask themselves how it came about that this passionately sincere man came to invite to lunch some one he obviously disliked. It is true that there are such things as business lunches, at which men who loathe each other may frequently be found overeating together; but this was not a business lunch. Then there is the question why, if the novelist is so helplessly sincere, he did not welcome me in the hall of the club with some such honest greeting as: "Frankly, I have never liked you; but if you care to come upstairs and lunch at my expense you may do so." Lunch in such circumstances would at least have been memorable. In the perfect story the novelist would then have taken me to the cloak-room and have said: "You'd better wash your hands. They need it." Having led me upstairs to a table, he would have sat down with a yawn and said: "Look here. Let's not bore each other with conversation. All men are bores at lunch but, if I may speak frankly, you, I have always thought, are the absolute limit." Calling for the wine-list, he would proceed in the same vein: "I know good wine is wasted on you, but as I like it myself I am ordering a bottle of No. 18." Then through lunch he would keep looking at me venomously, muttering under his breath: "How I loathe you! How I should like to wring your filthy neck! I have always detested Irishmen—especially Irishmen from Belfast. What I can't make out is why the Nationalists didn't strangle you in your cradle. Ye gods, how bored I am. Why, in heaven's name, did I ever invite you to lunch? Anyhow," he would say "I've had enough of it. We won't wait for the chicken. I think you'd better get out before I begin to tell you what I really think of you."

That, it must be admitted, would have had the ring of sincerity, if not of hospitality; and it may be that thoughts of the kind streamed through the brain of the novelist as we sat through lunch in a state of apparent amiability. But, if so, he was not sincere enough to utter them. He did not even lose his self-control to the point of uttering the barbed monosyllable "Why?" He may have uttered the word, but it was not barbed but spoken in persiflage. If it had been otherwise, I should have remembered it, for an insulting host, I imagine, is something not easily forgotten. The novelist, too, would have remembered it—unless he is a man who is rude to so many of his guests that an insult here or there means nothing to him. But he is not, and, like myself, he regards the story as a myth.

How, then, does such a story come to be believed, or to be told? We can partly explain it, I fancy, by the imperfection of the human ear. Ears are of all sorts, ranging from the acutely receptive to the deaf. Most ears, it is reasonable to suppose, are partially deaf. The majority of people, indeed, are much deafer than they realise. They are partially deaf both to the sound of words and to tones of speech. The mis-hearings of the almost entirely deaf have often been the theme of comedy. A character in a play tells a deaf man that some one has been struck by lightning, and the deaf man replies: "What's that? You say you've just come back from Brighton?" We have all experienced this kind of conversation and, as a result, we do not regard the deaf man as a trustworthy narrator of what has been told him. On the other hand, we place far too much reliance on the reports of the partially deaf. There are partially deaf people, for example, whose ears catch only some of the words in a sentence. If you told one of them that So-and-so had been drinking the waters at Harrogate, he—or she—would hear chiefly the word "drinking" and would be convinced that the unfortunate So-and-so was drinking himself to death. Half-hearing of a milder type causes innumerable errors of the same kind as the mistranslation of the Kaiser's "contemptibly little army" into "contemptible little army." The human ear is the lord of mistranslators. I doubt whether—especially at times of crisis, when the hearing is still further dulled—more than twenty-five per cent. of people are capable of hearing exactly what an opponent says. I wish someone would make a list of almost incredible mis-hearings. He would find plenty of them in the records of political controversy and in the law reports.

Even those who can hear words perfectly, however, frequently mis-hear tones of speech. Speak ironically and you will be taken seriously. Make a joke, and the ear of the hearer will translate it into earnest. The ear, indeed, is as mighty a deceiver as the eye or the brain. How deceptive are the eye and the brain was shown the other day when a famous humorist in the course of a column of cornucopian and deliberate nonsense made some such remark as: "Mr. Shaw ate a steak, and wrote *St. Joan*." The fact that this sentence appeared in a column of fun and that it was as completely surrounded by fun as an island by water, did not prevent an impassioned vegetarian from reading it literally and writing to the press to declare on the authority of Mr. Shaw that the statement was "a lie." If such misunderstandings can occur while a man is reading a daily paper at leisure and when a brilliant writer has made it clear that he is only joking, how can misunderstandings fail to occur when in the course of conversation words are hurtling past the ear at the rate of heaven knows how many words a minute?

"I couldn't believe my ears" is a phrase in common use. If anyone ever uses it to me again, I will reply: "My friend, why should you? Believe, if you will, Baron Munchausen; believe Louis de Rougemont; but no sane man would believe his ears unless they had been tested and passed by an aurist, a psychologist and a professor of persiflage." How right those Eastern philosophers are who declare that the world of the senses is an illusion! I do not know whether all the five senses are equally deceptive, but the eye and ear, at least, are marvellous deceivers. The poets have spoken well of the eye, and there is much to commend it from an aesthetic point of view. Two lovely blue eyes, however, may be so incapable of seeing accurately that in the witness-box they may help to send an innocent man to prison. How many witnesses, having seen the same thing, have really seen the same thing? If eyes could be believed, many of the cases in the criminal courts would be over in half the time. And, if the eye cannot be relied on, what of the ear, of which a wise man—himself once known as the Father of Lies—said: "The ear is a less trustworthy witness than the eye"? Like the eye, it has much to be said for it aesthetically, but it is the playboy of the head, never so happy as when taking part in a game of Russian Scandal. Perhaps my own ear mis-heard the sincere novelist in the club. Or, perhaps, not.

On the whole—relying on him rather than on my ear—I should be inclined to say: "Certainly not." Y. Y.

MR. BALDWIN AND BILBAO

Two reasons have been given by Mr. Baldwin for advising British shipping not to use the port of Bilbao. The first was the presence of mines. "The difficulty," said Mr. Baldwin, "is that this situation is a comparatively new one. It is possible now to sow harbours and the approaches to harbours with mines. This is a comparatively new problem . . ."

This statement alone suggests that the Government have been misadvised on the legal position. The problem of submarine mines is not new. Lawrence in his standard work, *War and Neutrality in the Far East*, published as early as

1904, gave some fifteen pages to the question, in the course of which he remarked " Mines are not new. . . . The first to employ them successfully at sea were the Confederates (in the American Civil War, 1861–1865) who mined their harbours and who blew up several of the attacking or blockading ships."

Great Britain took part in framing Convention VIII at the Second Hague Conference of 1907, which lays down actual rules for the use of mines. The second of these rules prohibits the laying of mines off the coasts and ports of the enemy with the sole object of intercepting commercial navigation. On behalf of Great Britain Sir Ernest Satow made a reservation against this rule on the ground that it did not go far enough. The British view, put very strongly, was that mines laid for any purpose either in territorial waters or in the high sea were in any case contrary to international law if they were likely to be a menace to neutral shipping. Therefore it will be seen that, far from the problem of mines being new, if the insurgent's forces, as it appears, are laying mines solely for the purpose of interfering with commercial navigation, they are offending against a rule of international law thirty years old. If they are laying mines in such a way as to be a danger to neutral shipping, then they are offending against what Great Britain declared thirty years ago to be at that time already the established rule of international law.

It is hard to find any explanation of Mr. Baldwin's words other than that the Cabinet's legal advisers were ignorant of Convention VIII and the whole discussion which took place at the Hague.

The second reason for the warning, implied only this time by Mr. Baldwin, was that inside Spanish territorial waters British ships might be attacked by air or by sea.

For this there is also a precedent, which, like the Hague Convention, was passed over in silence. In 1877 an almost identically similar situation arose in Peru. An insurgent cruiser, the " Huascar," took papers and coal from two British merchantmen. The merchantmen were at the time not only within Peruvian territorial waters but actually at anchor in harbour. The British Admiralty nevertheless treated the matter as piracy, and the rebel cruiser was engaged by a British man-of-war in territorial waters. The engagement was indecisive, and the British admiral thereupon organised a torpedo attack upon the rebel cruiser as she lay inside a Peruvian port. The case of the " Huascar " is quoted in all standard text books as the leading authority on the rights under international law which foreign Governments possess for dealing with insurgent interference with neutral shipping. It is remarkable that no reference at all was made by Mr. Baldwin to what up till now has been accepted as the correct rule in International Law nor any explanation given as to why this old-established view of law had been abandoned.

In reply to a direct question put to him by Mr. Attlee, Mr. Baldwin said that he did not consider that the position at Bilbao amounted to a blockade. In the absence of a blockade, even though the insurgents were recognised as belligerents, they would have only the right to stop British ships carrying contraband. They have made no declaration defining contraband, and it is doubtful whether food can ever be contraband; in any case the insurgents have no prize courts before which, under international law, any alleged case of carrying contraband must be brought before the ship or its cargo can be seized. According to the previously accepted standards of international law, General Franco's threats against neutral shipping would be quite unjustified even if he were recognised as a belligerent.

Great Britain's refusal to convey British ships through Spanish territorial waters is, therefore, an abandonment to the threat of force of the whole of the previously accepted standards of international law. It is unfortunate that if political circumstances necessitated such an abandonment the issue should have been confused by the quite erroneous suggestion that the question of mines was " a comparatively new problem."

BARRISTER

Correspondence

CONDITIONS AT BILBAO

SIR,—Your readers will doubtless be interested to hear something of the experience of the Church Delegation that visited Spain in the last few weeks. The Delegation consisted of The Dean of Canterbury, Rev. Father Iredell, Mrs. Hannah Laurie and Miss Olga Levertoff (Anglicans), Miss Monica Whately, L.C.C., and Mrs. Beer (Catholic) and Prof. MacMurray and Mr. D. R. Davies (Free Churches). Part of the delegation, Dean of Canterbury, Miss Whateley, Mrs. Beer, Prof. MacMurray and Mr. D. R. Davies went into the Basque country, with headquarters in Bilbao. The rest went into Valencia and Madrid.

Speaking on behalf of that part of the delegation that went to Bilbao I may say that we saw many things of the greatest interest and importance.

First, we happened, whether by good luck or bad fortune, to be actual witnesses of Franco's aerial attack on Durango. In view of the fact that General Franco claimed, over the broadcast, that Communists were guilty of dynamiting three churches in Durango, we, including the Dean of Canterbury, actually saw the dropping of the bombs over Durango. Within an hour of the attack we were in Durango itself and saw the damage inflicted. Three churches and an Augustinian convent were completely destroyed.

This raises the whole question of Church and religion in Spain, and particularly the Basque country. I may state that the only churches we saw destroyed in the Basque country were those destroyed by Franco's bombs. In Durango itself, I was only able to come across three Communists. There can be no doubt whatever that the churches in Durango were destroyed by Franco's Italian aeroplanes. The smoke of their bombs still lay about us as we entered Durango. Throughout the whole of the Basque country, we did not once see a single church destroyed or damaged in the slightest. On the contrary, all the churches were open and fully functioning. One of the officiating priests of St. Nicholas, the patron church of Bilbao, informed me that on Sunday, April 4th, the Church administered 7,000 communions. It was, in effect, the same story wherever we went. We travelled through the entire Basque province, still in Government hands, and wherever we went, town or country, all the churches were open, and at all hours of the day there were present men and women in considerable numbers.

The Basque people are among the most religious in Europe. Church and people are completely united. We were not able to trace the slightest division or enmity between Church and people in Bilbao or any other town or village. Many members of the Basque Government are themselves devout Catholics. In a unique way, the Catholic Church in the Basque country seems to have been identified with the people in their daily life and in their struggle for national freedom. In fact, there is no religious problem in the Basque. There is not the slightest hostility between the Government and the Church.

The problem facing the Basque Government is not that of a reactionary Fascist Church, but the problem of feeding the people. The acuteness of the food shortage in Bilbao and the Basque cannot be exaggerated. Let me give one or two examples.

I noticed an almost complete absence of horses. Upon inquiry I was informed that all the horses had already been killed for food. And not only the horses, but also dogs. I noticed a few dogs—and always the same ones—lean, gaunt and starving. Shops and cafés and restaurants are completely denuded. The shops are open a few hours a day and all food is strictly rationed. Queues are an established feature of the life of Bilbao. Throughout our stay, we never even saw a crumb of bread.

Let your readers be under no illusion. The food shortage in the Basque country is real and desperate. Women and children —to say nothing of the men and the soldiers—are suffering dreadful malnutrition, if malnutrition means sheer insufficiency of food. These things the Basque people are suffering in fighting our battles. It is not only the Government that is waging war against Franco. The whole people of Bilbao are solidly against Franco. His bombing of open towns has inspired the least politically conscious of the Basque masses with a deadly hatred. They are prepared to suffer death rather than surrender. In such a circumstance, the least we can do, in what is still supposed to be a democratic country, is to see to it that our Government shall not be

allowed to assist General Franco in starving a brave people who are fighting, not only for their own freedom, but for the liberty of every European and Britisher.

D. R. DAVIES

MODERN SCHOOLS

SIR,—

I who am no fool
Say, all should have one school;
Rich, poor, short or tall
There should be one for all;
Dull, clever, great or small,
Genius, dolt or fool
All should have one school.

To sixteen up from seven
There should be this leaven;
All English girls and boys
Have the same tasks and joys;
A noble State employs
Teachers the best that be
Compulsory and free.

There should be this leaven
To sixteen up from seven,
Then let talent show
The way each has to go:
Genius, blockhead, fool
Now in a different school
Or in no school at all.

The genius and the fool
God gave them both one school,
Life! And life will be
Unequal, rich and free
When false distinctions fall
From men schoolfellows all—
Dull, clever, great and small.

HEADMASTER

SIR,—W. L. S.'s article used the oldest and most absurd arguments such as one only expects from complete reactionaries. As, for instance, that boys from a "free" school on returning to conventional school life began to wash their necks. The truth on this subject of cleanliness is actually that, in the older types of school, bathroom facilities are frequently most inadequate and the child in such schools is too often restricted to a weekly bath, whereas the allegedly unwashed progressive child has a hot bath every night, together with far more frequent opportunities for swimming and for wearing little clothing, which make him a cleaner and healthier type than the black-coated urchin whom the schoolmaster creates for the fun of disciplining him into neck washing.

Then this matter of letting children "give up" subjects that they do not like. The whole trend of reform of the examination system to-day is towards greater latitude in subjects, because it is obviously preferable that students should work at the subjects they like, and there is grave doubt as to whether they remember very much of what they have been driven to learn under threat of punishment. Long before the examination age the child reared to independence is capable of setting himself steadily to rather dull work when he realises that it is necessary for the career he has chosen. Moreover, the liberty he gets *before* examinations loom enables both him and his teachers to find out what he is really fitted for, rather than what he can cram. The danger with the able child in the old system is that he can cram anything, does all his subjects to get credit marks, and has no time to think what he really likes doing and what it may lead to in adult life.

The "Ex-Victims" hit the nail on the head, and I wish that parents and educators would listen to them. Buildings and equipment are only the shell of education. The teachers' character and ability, fresh air and good food are the important things. Educational authorities go in for buildings first; parents notice the headmaster's study and the grandeur of house and grounds, failing to realise that these are paid for only too often by poor food and underpaid and second-rate staff. If parents would give up their snobbery, the progressive schools, which pick and train many able young men and women teachers, would be in a position to retain their services when their experience warrants them receiving higher salaries. The sneering attitude works very great harm in respect of these young teachers. They become valuable by virtue of the pioneer experience they have had, and in their subsequent career they often find that they must minimise or decry that training which gives life and body to their work even when done under more conventional conditions.

W. L. S. does not think that the world is getting better and better. At the same time he is satisfied with the products of old-fashioned education, which still accounts for the majority of ex-pupils. To whom then is the bad state of the world due? Is it to the handful educated on modern lines or to the mass whose minds have been so little "exercised" that they cannot reason logically about events in Europe to-day, and whose hearts are so dulled that they merely shrug shoulders and vacantly hope to keep out of trouble, while men and women die for the crime of imagining a better world and tyranny marches steadily nearer their own country?

DORA RUSSELL

Beacon Hill School,
The Glebe, Northiam, Sussex.

THE LEFT BOOK CLUB

SIR,—Mr. J. Allen Skinner's letter in your last issue shows ignorance of the facts.

"It can be assumed that it is not the intention of such a Club to publish works expressing an orthodox Right Wing or Labour Party point of view." Mr. Skinner must not make hasty assumptions. I announced many months ago in the *Left News* that Attlee, the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, was writing a book, to be a Club choice, entitled *The Labour Party in Perspective*: and this "title" has been given in every one of the hundreds of thousands of descriptive leaflets which have been issued for the Club during the last months. The book is now nearing completion and I expect to have the manuscript in my hands in two or three weeks' time.

This book will form one of a trio of "choices," which will be issued over a period of four or five months. The other two are *The Postwar History of the British Working Class*, by Allen Hutt, a Communist; and *The People's Front*, by G. D. H. Cole, who, I suppose, might be described as "unofficial Labour" and is certainly not a Communist. Here, then, is a group of three books dealing broadly with the same topic and representing the points of view of official Labour, unofficial Labour and Communism.

I could, of course, give many other instances of Mr. Skinner's inaccuracy. For instance, the choices have included books by Salvemini (Liberal anti-Communist), Rudolf Olden (ditto), Stephen Spender (who at the time of writing was half-way between Liberalism and Communism and whose book was very critical—erroneously, in my opinion—of certain aspects of the Soviet regime)—Jellinek (I am not sure what his political opinions are, but I believe that he is a *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, and is therefore probably not a Communist), and George Orwell (whose book was written from a completely independent point of view and was highly critical of many characteristics of Liberals, Socialists and Communists alike); and among the "additional" books, which are only second in importance to the "choices," have been *The Struggle for Peace*, by Sir Stafford Cripps (Socialist League), *The Private Manufacture of Armaments*, by Philip Noel-Baker (Labour Party), *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, etc., etc. But perhaps I have said sufficient.

VICTOR GOLLANCZ

14 Henrietta Street,
Covent Garden, London, W.C.2.

SIR,—Mr. Allen Skinner's letter attacking the parochialism of the Left Book Club Selection Committee was most salutary, though he did not mention the fundamental peculiarity of the whole business—that so many people in what is supposed to be a nation of individualists should be willing to have their reading regularly chosen for them by an exclusive committee of this kind. No doubt laziness and foolish bookshop-phobia partly account for the Club's huge membership; partly, too, the ingenious dodge by which 2*s.* 6*d.* appears to buy often as much as 10*s.* 6*d.* worth—this, as the huckster knows, never fails. But I do not think Mr. Skinner can properly call workers "politically alive" who are not even intellectually alive enough to do a little looking round on their own account before deciding what and when to buy.

All credit to dictator Gollancz for having seen that there are 42,000 intellectual sheep in Great Britain; but I hope some of them may soon realise that there is often excellent grass outside the particular pen into which they are monthly herded.

The danger that Left books from other publishers get crowded

out is a real one, as any progressive bookseller will tell you. An instance of this occurred last winter when the Club issued *Spain in Revolt*, which expert reviewers found to be merely a hasty and inaccurate digest by two not too well-informed American journalists. This inadequate compilation, however, was the one that had the 40,000 sale, while other books at comparable prices, Carlos Prieto's *Spanish Front* and Conze's *Spain To-day*, both of them authoritative and helpful, sold quite humbly. This sort of thing may well happen again, and the past failures of book publishers to co-operate do not encourage one to believe that Mr. Skinner's scheme could ever be made workable. But something of the kind is obviously desirable, and perhaps Mr. Gollancz himself, if his motives are as disinterested as he would have us believe, will suggest something. Or will he?

32 Great Ormond Street, T. M. HORDER
London, W.C.1.

SIR,—As one of the publishing houses presumably referred to by Mr. Allen Skinner in his letter on the Left Book Club "who have been able to do valuable work in maintaining a free press for Socialist thought," we may be permitted to say that so far from Mr. Gollancz's vivid and successful propaganda for Left books "starving us out," it has actually helped. Naturally, there is certain, we hope friendly, competition for works and authors. But he has succeeded in putting Left books right where they should be, and in persuading people to buy progressive thoughtful books who had not done so before. And, commercially speaking, these people want more Left books—our books among them. The benefit to Left bookshops—centres of culture in many a provincial town—of the Left Book Club membership is tremendous. It "lifted us from the mud" is how one of their booksellers described the matter. And this benefits us, gives us a fresh market as well as the other publishers of Left books.

Lawrence and Wishart, Ltd., A. E. PARSONS
2 Parton Street, London, W.C.1.

UNIVERSITY HOOLIGANISM

SIR,—"We must have faith that this example will finally prevail because men are so made that they must still follow the highest when they see it."

A friend of mine read out this sentence to me to-day from the current issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and asked me to guess from what part of the paper he had extracted it. Quick as a flash, I replied: 'From the 'This England' column." Imagine my astonishment when I learned that it had appeared in the correspondence columns, being the colophon to a credo enunciated by Sir Philip Magnus.

I am enchanted by a saint-like belief in the excellence of human nature which in any other than the twentieth century might have been considered almost pathological. I now realise the faith which inspired the firing of the Reichstag and the reprisals at Addis Ababa. I realise that it is only because "men are so made that they must still follow the highest when they see it," that the young men at Cracow threw the Jewish girl-students on the floor and kicked their faces in.

Sir Philip maintains "that there is so much that cries out for sympathy and redress at home." He is right and, if a section of the undergraduates at Oxford or Manchester Universities were to be treated as the Jewish students were treated in Pecs and Cluj, there would be forty million Britishers in Great Britain alone wanting to know the reason why. When these things happen to Jewish students in Cluj and Pecs there are not more than sixteen million Jews the world over to utter a word of protest, and it would seem reasonable to expect that those most fortunately circumstanced might protest the matter most sharply.

Sir Philip will not expect me, or any other Jew, to believe that it is not by the sheerest accident of tribal migration that he himself did not have a nephew at Cluj who had his teeth knocked out, or a niece at Pecs who had her hair torn out by the roots. If it had happened that way, I wonder if that would have shaken Sir Philip's confidence in his almost too sweet philosophy.

16, Hamilton Terrace, N.W.8. LOUIS GOLDING.

SIR,—Everybody will agree with the sound principle laid down by Sir Philip Magnus that sensibility should be "fittingly conjoined with sense," but one wonders why he missed the opportunity of exemplifying this principle in his letter. If he, indeed, feels any sympathy for the students of his race who are persecuted at Universities in Central and Eastern Europe, it is difficult to understand why he protested against my article, in which I suggested that the rousing of public opinion in the Western world might help to bring about an alleviation of their lot. Neither in my article nor in my reply to his first letter did I suggest political intervention.

Sir Philip is quite mistaken in saying that I admitted that the Minorities Treaties are to-day obsolete, for I made no such admission. On the contrary, there are, fortunately, States in which these Treaties are carefully observed. He believes that in those States in which they are violated people will be persuaded to amend their ways by contemplating "the decent, ordered, tolerant, happy and prosperous living" that exists in the British Commonwealth. *Sancta simplicitas!* Since the good example set by virtuous people in countries in which race-hatred is rampant utterly fails to influence those of their compatriots who indulge in barbarous excesses, it is idle to hope that good examples from distant lands will have even the least effect upon them.

ISRAEL COHEN

SIR HERBERT BARKER

SIR,—Since I last wrote to you Sir Herbert Barker has heaped coals of fire on my head by asking me to tea, and submitting with the utmost good humour both to be cross-examined on his work and to be lectured on what he ought to do about it. I was rather disappointed personally because, although I use manipulation a lot, his range of work does not coincide with mine at all. On the other hand, I admit freely that, though I have always thought he had much to teach, I have probably underestimated the originality of his methods, and overestimated the extent to which they are generally known.

He tells me that he is really going to get on with the recording of his work, particularly in the form of the surgical textbook of the future, the cinematograph film. I think he was wrong to leave this till now; anyone who has stirred the dust of medical history knows that work of value really does disappear completely for lack of recording and teaching. However, it will serve to occupy the last twenty years of his career before he finally retires; always providing that the osteopaths do not get their Bill passed, and so make it an offence for him or his like to manipulate at all. I gathered that Sir Herbert's opinion of that artless attempt to establish a transatlantic monopoly was not very different from my own.

As far as I can make out, a good deal of the trouble on this point of publication has arisen from Sir Herbert's forgetting the old saying that "Corporations have neither souls to save, not backsides to kick." This has led him to ignore individuals and try to get in touch with some sort of central medical executive with an interest in technique; a body that might possibly be useful, but that unfortunately does not exist.

I wish him luck. I know what he will come up against: those who say that results they have not bothered to inspect are impossible; and those who say that methods are utterly wrong, and that anyway they have been using them themselves for the last forty years. But at least he should stop the Blimps of our profession, those who vindicated our dignity by striking Dr. Axham off the Register, from saying "Gad Sir, Lord Scalpel is right. The feller's results are so good that he doesn't dare to publish them!"

DENIS BROWNE
48 Queen Anne Street,
Cavendish Square, London, W.1.

AN ANTI-FASCIST CONFERENCE

SIR,—On Sunday, April 25th, at 3 p.m., an All London Delegate Conference on Fascism and Anti-Semitism will be held at Beaver Hall, Garlick Hill, Cannon Street, E.C.4, organised by my Council in conjunction with the Jewish People's Council.

At this Conference the speakers will include The Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Moses Gaster, Mr. A. M. Wall of the London Trades Council and Mr. J. Jacobs. It will be conducted on strictly non-party lines and the delegates will be asked to consider the practical steps that can be taken to combat propaganda based on racial prejudice and associated with incitement to disorderly conduct. The conference will be unique in so far as it is the first occasion on which Jewish and non-Jewish organisations have officially co-operated to oppose Fascism and to uphold democratic rights.

A very large number of invitations have been sent to Societies

asking them to send delegates, but if any Society interested in this matter has been omitted we shall be glad if they will communicate immediately with this office. RONALD KIDD,

The National Council for Civil Liberties, Secretary.
Morley House, 320 Regent Street, London, W.1.

FACTORIES BILL

SIR,—Those associated with us in the Factories Bill Campaign have read with much interest in your paper a number of articles on factory conditions and the new Factories Bill.

This Campaign has been working to arouse public interest in this vitally important measure, and it has supplied information and literature to hundreds of organisations and individuals. Some 50,000 leaflets, pamphlets and other notes have been distributed throughout the country, and it has also supplied speakers to nearly 100 meetings.

The Bill is now reaching a most critical stage in its career through Parliament, and it is essential that we should be in a position during the next two months to carry on our work. Our funds are now almost exhausted, and we therefore ask your permission to appeal for donations, however small, to those of your readers interested in the welfare of the 7,000,000 persons engaged in industry.

Donations should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, 7, Bayley Street, London, W.C.1, and we shall be glad to supply further information if required. GERTRUDE TUCKWELL, Chairman.
ROSAMOND TWEEDY.
L. D. ALEXANDER.

7, Bayley Street, London, W.C.1.

Miscellany

THE STAGE SOCIETY

THE first play of The Stage Society's season was performed at the Westminster Theatre last Sunday. They certainly did not stint us. *Angelica* (a satirical play in verse by the late Leo Ferrero) is a vivacious rhetorical drama (the prose translation by Mr. Ossia Trilling and Mr. Emanuel Wax seemed to be excellent), requiring a crowded stage, a long cast, and that animation on the part of the actors necessary when half the figures are puppets and situations are symbolical. Bustle and animation were well maintained; while several of the actors, notably Miss Clare Greet, in the small part of the café-proprietress, and Mr. Walter Hudd, in the all-important part of the Regent, were admirable. Mr. Hudd found the gestures (rare, quiet, slightly sinister) and the intonations (clipped and peremptory) proper to a consistent type. It was a good performance. Mr. Hudd is evidently an actor who can arrest attention without being emphatic, which is a somewhat rare accomplishment. It is doubtful if he played the Regent as conceived by Leo Ferrero, whose tyrant was a poet and, judging from some of his utterances, a more exuberant, full-blooded man; but Mr. Hudd's cynical impersonation certainly brought out the two features of the part essential to the drama—love of power and contempt for mankind. In courage and personal dignity there must be nothing to choose between him and his antithesis, Orlando, who loathes exercising power and is impelled by a selfless devotion to Mankind. He succeeds in deposing the tyrant, but he fails to govern in his place. That is the situation on which the curtain falls. Orlando is shot by Angelica, who, beside being a maid over whom the Regent intends to exercise *le droit du Seigneur* on her marriage night, also typifies to him (and to us) Liberty.

Theme number one, lovers of Liberty perish at her hand; theme number two, the domination of romantic egotists is intolerable; theme number three . . . a query.

Theme number two is rapidly and wittily exhibited in the first act, and, too, with something of the bitterness to be expected from a son of modern Italy and of a distinguished Italian historian who was at one time harassed under the Fascist regime. The historian, Signor Ferrero, has, it seems, come to terms with the Duce since then; Leo Ferrero, I believe, died in exile. There is hardly any limit to the indulgence which I, for my part, feel inclined to extend to the timidity of a scholar in ruthless times; but I thought I detected in the comic hedging and hopping from side to side of the Bolognese Professor in the play a possible satire by a resolute son on an academic father. The Professor has in his possession two letters from the Regent's Government, one proposing to exalt him, the other threatening to degrade him, and he reads these alternately (once he proudly shows the wrong letter!) to Fascists and anti-Fascists, thus proving to each side, in turn, the soundness of his sympathies.

The scene is laid in the market-place of Fantastica, where, it is announced, an anti-Regent public meeting is about to be held. It does not promise to be well attended; and the first act opens amusingly by two government spies attempting to arrest each other. A little later they are both taken up by a spy whose business it is to spy on spies. Thus, rapidly and neatly, the system is suggested on which the totalitarian State rests. Whether of a Soviet or a Fascist persuasion it breeds spies, sneaks and blackmailers.

Meanwhile, the citizens are worried almost beyond endurance; Fantastica's foreign trade has been ruined; the profits of its business-men disappear in the Regent's coffers; the cost of living mounts; a larger and larger army is required, and the glory of the Regent must be maintained. And now this last outrage to common humanity! But what can they do? Angelica's father whimpers and rages, her bridegroom dolefully remembers that his prospects in a diplomatic career are also concerned; the populace are indignant. A healthy ancient, an English philosopher in a long white beard and bathing-suit, converses genially with an unseen political prisoner behind bars. He explains that there is no such thing as "freedom." Why, therefore, should a man object to being deprived of it? If he were not shut up, would he be free? No, no, he still would be the slave of his passions and economic laws. Our spirits rise when this gay old person is bustled off himself, flurried and protesting, to gaol. Puns are the bane of philosophy, and though to any one of us the years may bring, if we live long enough, the serenity of indifference, let us hope we may not mistake it for wisdom.

Then Orlando appears; he has but one talisman, one prescription, courage. He holds the meeting. He tells the citizens that if they would only stop being afraid the Regent's power would collapse. Among his servants are many who feel like them and many more who from self-interest will change sides. And when the Regent is proceeding in state along the crimson drugget to the torch-lit door of Angelica's house, Orlando literally "pulls the carpet on him," as the Americans say. Down he tumbles, though he is up again as quick as a cat. But the fatal roar of laughter has been released and with it the revolution. The crowd want to kill him at once, but Orlando tells them to leave them alone together. Then follows the most interesting dialogue in the play. The Regent asks Orlando why he made the revolution. Did he want power and to exalt himself? When he discovers that Orlando hates power and is completely disinterested, he tells him he is doomed and he proceeds to expound his own philosophy: men are contemptible, creatures born to be the slaves of the courageous and imaginative. Whom do they genuinely admire? A man like Napoleon who fulfilled their secret dreams of grandeur and domination, who left a code behind him (chiefly the work of others) and a legacy of lasting hatred between nations; a man whose career was almost entirely destructive of human happiness. Orlando will fail because he is alien to mankind; his disinterestedness is a reproach to them; in their hearts they will hate him. Orlando's retort is to ask the Regent what sort of a world it would be if all rulers had held and continued to hold that philosophy. But in his own case, the Regent proves a true prophet.

After a scene of dancing, pilfering and confusion (typifying a Kerensky revolution) the ex-supporters of the Regent and the cringers before that regime begin to close in upon Orlando more and more menacingly. He must kill the Regent who

has been left free to reconvert the people. Orlando must use force and re-establish them in their old jobs or safe equivalent ones. He refuses; and when Angelica discovers that it was not her he loved, but Liberty, she shoots him. This is the weak place in the play. The dialogue between them has no relation that I could see with the symbolic drift of the drama.

Orlando is an unconscionable time dying, and I am afraid I did not catch all he said (nor was I touched), but the drift seemed to be that there must be many a martyr to the cause of humanity before humanity learns to recognise its true friends. (Mr. Keith-Johnson struggled manfully with the difficulty of this part.) The play ends with a patter of typical comments on Orlando. The bureaucrats say he had no idea of government, the woman of the world that he was no poet (like the Regent) and looked ridiculous on a horse, the artist that he cared nothing for art, having refused to sit for his statue, etc., etc. The people are dumb and feel too late that they have lost a friend, but they have acquired a legend.

The Stage Society have once again, you see, fulfilled their function of performing a play worth thinking about which, partly owing to its merits, and partly to its defects, we should not otherwise have seen. DESMOND MACCARTHY

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Henry V," at the Old Vic

While some of Shakespeare's most fascinating plays are "unpleasant" in the Victorian sense—misanthropic, cynical and neurotic—the two plays most offensive to our sensibilities to-day are *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Henry V*, and it is just these two which will represent "le grand Will" to our Coronation visitors. One understands why Miss Baylis has picked *Henry V*: it is a pageant (or what it is now fashionable to call a cavalcade) in praise of patriotism and royalty. Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, the producer, and Mr. Laurence Olivier, who acts Harry, have done their best to disinfect the play. The King is made as unpompous as possible, and Mr. Olivier's fascinating presence and voice go far to obliterate the heartiness of the role, and to emphasise the thoughtfulness such as appears in the great soliloquy about ceremony. (He wears a fair reddish wig, though Henry, it is said, had dark hair, but perhaps this is a necessary disguise to prevent us from seeing him still as Hamlet). Mr. Guthrie has gone very far in his attempt to turn a chronicle play into something more dramatic. He makes the French King crazy, which is good history but perhaps not very good Shakespeare, for the text never suggests this. But he has been most successful in making atmosphere in the camp scenes, and the play becomes much more interesting than it usually appears. The comic scenes are the weakest: we did not like the Pistol, and Miss Ivy St. Helier plays Mistress Quickly brilliantly but, we think, mistakenly. In her narration of Falstaff's death she is entirely tragic instead of goggling, she is Hecuba not a bawd. And the pathos of this particularly Shakespearean passage is largely lost. Mr. Leo Genn as Burgundy and Mr. Ernest Hare as Williams stood out in a very good cast by the particular excellence of their performance: and Mr. Marius Goring, as the Clown, with almost the best lines in the play to deliver, once more dazzled and delighted us. There is no actor on our stage of whom we have higher hopes. Miss Jessica Tandy in the tiny part of Katherine acts exquisitely, and looks indescribably lovely. The decor by Motley is ingenious, appropriate and a continual pleasure to the eye—a notable and informative contrast to the fatiguing, vulgar brightness of the decor at *The Taming of the Shrew*. Mr. Guthrie, helped by Mr. Olivier, Mr. Goring and Motley, has contrived, in fact, to make *Henry V* into one of the Old Vic's most successful productions.

Mark Gertler, at The Lefevre

Mr. Gertler is a painter who has always commanded our respect rather than won our heart. He has been extremely accomplished, notably honest and original. But his pictures have too often been unpleasing in colour and almost ostentatiously lacking in charm. Suddenly he has come through: his patience has been rewarded; and his new pictures at the Lefevre Gallery place him in our opinion beside Mr. Sickert and Mr. Grant in the front rank of living English painters. The texture of his

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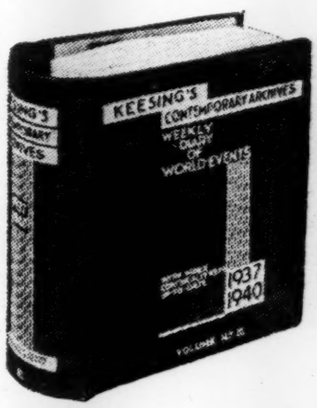

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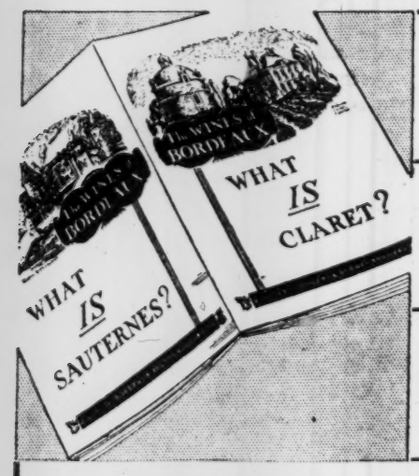
paint has a new richness, reminding one sometimes of Courbet; the compositions are thoughtful without appearing too unspontaneous; the colour is extraordinarily sumptuous. Like so many of the English painters of his generation, he has been inclined to suppress a native talent for lyrical decoration, and to pursue a classical severity which comes easier to the compatriots of Pascal and Poussin than to those of Shakespeare and Gainsborough. Now that he has freed himself and found a way of painting which is happy in both senses of the word, the value of the long years of discipline and research becomes apparent. Among the younger painters many have charm, but remain amateurs. Here is an artist who has complete control, who can do what he wishes, and who can therefore afford to be delightful.

First British Artists' Congress, at 41 Grosvenor Square

The most cheerful aspect of this huge exhibition is its politics, for they are of the Millennium. At No. 41 Grosvenor Square, timid belated impressionist wolves dwell with the surrealist lambs; the Sage Picasso hangs demurely beside the work of a twelve-year-old girl; the unchanging propagandist leopards lie down with the pretty kids of abstract art. And if the abstract art section is the best arranged it is so much more to the credit of the abstract artists who have achieved such a smart effect—for all start equal in those gilt and marble halls. So, too, one can see that there is some reason for the banishment to the banisters of abstract works by Mr. Moynihan and Mr. Tibble (the only school of abstract painting in England which does not derive entirely from the continent), since these are in a minority and out of sympathy with the rest. The exhibition is international as well as being democratic—particularly the surrealist groups in Belgium and France are well represented. But work in the rooms devoted to straightforward painting is all English. This part of the exhibition looks deplorably unsubversive. Mr. Duncan Grant's Policeman is so clearly neither a bully nor an *agent provocateur*, while the farmhouses and flowers which surround him are plainly the reactions of individuals recorded without a thought of elections. "The days when the artist was regarded as a romantic individualist are over," claims one of the several prefaces relating to the exhibition. This section bristles with romantic individualism. Mr. Augustus John, Miss Ethel Walker, Mrs. Vanessa Bell, Mr. Pasmore and Miss Alison Debenham are still, like their hundreds of co-exhibitors, sunk in what appears to be irretrievable individuality. Though presumably all are imbued with a love of "peace, democracy and cultural progress," they are still cultivating their gardens—as almost all good artists always have. In connection with this excellent exhibition there are meetings on Friday, 23rd, at 8 p.m. at the Conway Hall, and on Saturday and Sunday at Grosvenor Square.

"Lost Horizon," at the Tivoli from Monday

Mr. Frank Capra, whose publicity acclaims him as the director who never fails, has wanted to make a film of Mr. James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* for a long time, and has waited patiently to get Mr. Ronald Colman to play the part of the semi-saintly British diplomat who is its hero. Like Mr. Hilton, Mr. Capra is an expert in dealing with material that could become dangerously slushy if mishandled. In *It Happened One Night* or *Mr. Deeds*, or in Mr. Hilton's *Knight Without Armour*, the sentimental is made palatable by brilliant and delicate technique. But in *Lost Horizon* the machinery has faltered. Where in his earlier films Mr. Capra brought his characters to the threshold of earthly paradise and left the rest safely to the audience's imagination, in *Lost Horizon* he has attempted to go farther and to make Heaven concrete. The Utopia near Turkestan which Mr. Hilton made so enchanting has very comprehensively proved beyond Mr. Capra's power of realisation. The atmosphere is that of a slightly cranky co-educational school with the added advantage that no one ever seems to grow old. Mr. Colman's inhibited and gentlemanly style of acting adds to the rigidity of the effect. Sex—as opposed to love—never raises its ugly head. Fortunately however, the comic elements are free from the stink of uplift. Mr. Edward Everett Horton has some exquisitely maidenly lines and business. Mr. H. B. Warner, who was so good as the judge in *Mr. Deeds*, is very charming as a minor lama. Margo has a short but rather monotonous part. Only those who have been expecting Mr. Capra to trip over his own talents will not be disappointed by this film; but it is only fair to add that the disappointment does not start till Mr. Capra has run through a very brilliant opening reel.



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THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, April 17th—
National Youth Conference on Spain. Y.W.C.A., Gt. Russell Street, 3. And on April 18th at 10.

SUNDAY, April 18th—
John Katz on "Religion and the Intellectuals," Conway Hall, 11.
"La Vie est à Nous," Film Society, New Gallery, 2.30.
Canon Sheppard on "Christianity and War," St. Paul's Cathedral, 3.15.
Dr. Har Dayal on "The Future of Democracy," 153 Finchley Road, 6.15.
Debate: "Reformism or Revolution?" Willoughby Hall, Hampstead, 8.
Production by the Mask Theatre, 42 Linden Gardens, 9.

MONDAY, April 19th—
"Otello." Opening of International Opera Season, Covent Garden.
K. S. Shelvankar on "Politics and Economics of Empire in India," Large Memorial Hall, 8.
R. Robertus on "The Catholic Church and Labour," 39 Doughty Street, 8.30.

TUESDAY, April 20th—
Dr. Wallace Crawford on "The New China," Friends House, 1.20.
"Post Road," Queen's.
"Festival Time," Embassy.

WEDNESDAY, April 21st—
Robert Mayer Coronation Concert, People's Palace, 11.
Fabian Women's Group Dinner, Lysbeth Hall, 7. Tickets, 5s. 6d. from Miss Corthorne, 1 Ormond Mansions, W.C.1.
Report by Christian Delegation to Spain. Speakers: Clement Attlee, Dean of Canterbury, Prof. John MacMurray, Father Iredell and others, Friends House, 8.
"And On We Go," Savoy.
"Hugh the Drover," Sadler's Wells.

THURSDAY, April 22nd—
Antony Tudor on "The Ballet," Morley College, 8.
Colin Clark on "The Ownership and Distribution of Capital and Incomes," Livingstone Hall, 8.
Salzburg Festival Concert in Aid of Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital, Queen's Hall, 8.30.
"Parsifal," Covent Garden.

FRIDAY, April 23rd—
Dance on behalf of Spanish Medical Aid, New Burlington Galleries, 9. Tickets, 5s.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

The first law of humour is that things can be funny only when we are in fun. There may be a serious thought or motive lurking underneath our humour. We may be only "half in fun and still funny." But when we are not in fun at all, when we are "in dead earnest" humour is the thing that is dead.

NOT to others, but to ourselves be it understood. With these words Mr. Max Eastman begins Part I of his new treatise on humour called *Enjoyment of Laughter* (Hamish Hamilton, 12*s.* 6*d.*). But doesn't this awful truth make humour appear worthless, a sort of hypocrisy brought out on special occasions—a habit, I mean, that can be suddenly cut off at the very root, leaving a cold and baleful stare in its place? Oughtn't our manners and our humour to be such that life, and we ourselves, would be unthinkable without them? All humour is dead when we are not in fun! Somehow Mr. Eastman takes all the *enjoyment* of laughter out of it and he doesn't seem to mind a bit, while I feel that it would be more honourable to eschew the practice altogether like the centenarian M. de Fontenelle, who was asked if he wouldn't laugh, and replied: "Non. Je ne fais jamais Ah-Ah-Ah." The thought of mankind—all, at certain moments, in dead earnest; and then, at certain other times of the volleys of Ah-Ah-Ah's ringing out as the wisecracks and the stories of the Englishman, the Scotchman and the Jew make their appearances; Oh how ignoble! If only there were a few exceptions to this humiliating law—a few beings like the lanky figure grinning at the little girl in pigtails in Max Beerbohm's caricature of Matthew Arnold and Mrs. Humphry Ward—with the caption: "*Why is it Uncle Matthew that you are never wholly serious?*" But, alas, we know that (when not contemplating his niece) Uncle Matthew often was dead in earnest. Must we believe that this mental dichotomy was absolutely complete in the case of Shakespeare? The thought of young Caesar cracking bloodthirsty jokes about hanging with the pirates and then, after he was ransomed, returning with a hangman and plenty of rope is positively refreshing in comparison with that of Mussolini, first "in dead earnest" and then "in fun." Surely there must have been a few who were most in earnest when they seemed to be in fun? T. E. Lawrence cracking jokes in a parody of the military text-books while he was organising his model victory at Tafila is an instance. Such a blend of humour and earnestness seems to be the ideal of modern Europe, while America seems content to keep them separate. In discussing laughter with Mr. Eastman, Mr. Chaplin came near to expressing my own feelings:

Modern humour frightens me a little. The Marx Brothers are frightening. Thurber, Stewart, Joe Cook, Benchley—yes, all of them. They say, "All right, this is how we live and we'll live this way." They go in for being crazy. It's a soul-destroying thing. They say "All right, you're insane, we'll appeal to your insanity." They make insanity the convention. They make humour a promise: Acquiescence in everything disintegrating. . . . There's no *conduct* in their humour. They haven't any attitude. It's up-to-date of course—a part of the chaos.

Chaplin is, of course, a Cockney—a fact which Mr. Eastman seems to have forgotten when printing his opinion that "The British have a healthy, soulful, boisterous humour, very witty too, and never clever" as though it were an independent testimonial. And in the passage I have quoted he was expressing the dismay of Europe at finding the most civilised and civilising attitude of mind becoming barbarous, and in doing so becoming more powerful. Like the rules of war, the rules of humour have been scrapped. But Chaplin, I think, like all flowers of European culture, wants to see life as a unity: he can't bear to see everything first "in dead earnest" and then as insane.

* * *

Mr. Eastman is chiefly concerned to illustrate his theories of laughter with examples of American humour, which he claims, in a magnificently rhetorical passage, as his country's great gift to the world. What are America's other great gifts? And has this savage humour "without conduct" any relation to the gramophone, the mass-produced car, the safety razor, the cellophane wrapper? Yes. It has affinities with America's greatest gift of all: anaesthetics. Laughing gas for physical agony and laughter for the broken spirit when it can bear no more. It seems to me that Mr. Eastman was wrong to call his book *Enjoyment of Laughter*. American jokes are an anodyne, an anaesthetic, or a dope. And so to some extent are the works of Wodehouse. There is more enjoyment in an ordinary family over its private jokes, unintelligible outside the home circle, than in a whole anthology of American humour. Mr. Eastman does not discuss what are the deadly conditions of life which have called forth the crazy jester. He does not put forward any theory comparable to that which Mr. Van Wyck Brooks advanced in his study of Mark Twain—that the reason why Twain spent all his strength in holding civilisation and the arts up to ridicule was because, during the intense struggle with Nature, American culture had passed almost entirely into the hands of unmarried women. Mr. Eastman is largely concerned with swatting the theories which others, such as Freud and Ludovici, have advanced; it is to his credit that he does not put forward any really sweeping and novel untruths of his own. Most readers will go to him for the pleasure of reading the hundreds of funny stories which he tells by way of illustrating his subject, and also for the sake of hearing what Thurber and Chaplin, etc., have had to say. One of the funniest pages is devoted to the opinions of Mr. J. V. Connolly, who boasts that he distributes more humour over the face of the earth than any other man. He is the head of the King Features Syndicate which purveys comic strips in the press. Mr. Connolly visited England expressly to find out what our national tastes in humour might be, since we seemed unresponsive to comic strips.

I went to a music-hall and sat there with the audience roaring and rocking all around me and I came away just as ignorant as I went. I positively didn't know what they were laughing at and neither did they.

As a result of this experience Mr. Connolly hotly declared that the British have no humour and indeed do not know what humour is. The evidence seems irrefutable, but Mr. Eastman gives us the benefit of the doubt:

England's sales resistance to the comic strip can as well be advanced in proof of her humorous maturity as of her lack of humour (and in either case I have no doubt our Mr. Connolly will break it down).

I admit the American claim to superiority in humour because James Thurber seems to me greater than any of our comic writers. He is also one of the few really comic draughtsmen. One can class his drawings, as Chaplin does, with the Marx Brothers. His stories seem to me to be packed with meaning and to be the most bitter comments on life. Such is the story of the man who wants to buy himself a box to hide in—but at all the grocery stores they only have the cartons that cans come in, and he drags his persecution mania gloomily from store to store, leaving curious looks on the faces behind the counters. There does, however, seem to be a weakness in criticism in America. For example, Mr. Eastman writes in deadly earnest:

He was the first man in English literature to set down on his page, quite like a French painter reared in the tradition of art for art's sake, a series of tiny highly polished verbal pictures, and leave them there for what they might be worth.

Was this Landor by any chance? No. It was Josh Billings, who wrote: *The gote iz a koarse wollen sheep*, and *The duk don't kro like a rooster, but quaks like a duk.* Several American humorists seem to have won immense fame also by a primitive gift for exaggeration. Irvin S. Cobb is regarded by Mr. Eastman as more imaginative than Dickens, because he tells taller stories. To my mind one might as well compare the song about the gentleman whose trousers were made of haggis bags and whose waistcoat was made of good roast beef, with the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

DAVID GARNETT

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

Things Past Redress. By AUGUSTINE BIRRELL. *Faber and Faber.* 15s.

After 1916 the unemployed statesmen of England included several distinguished names, the Great War of the twentieth century resembling in this respect the Great War of the nineteenth. Of these derelicts, if that term can be used without disparagement, Asquith, Grey and Morley all published books of reminiscence while their impressions of their past were still vivid. Birrell delayed partly from his natural habits, partly, as he told the present writer, because he became very distrustful of his memory. This mistrust was aggravated by a curious incident. He was once invited by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool to a luncheon at which the famous sons of that city sang her praises. Birrell could not go, but he sent a letter in the course of which he told a story about a prize-giving by Dickens. The story is worth giving as he told it.

> When on one occasion Dickens was in Liverpool on a reading tour he was pounced upon by our School of Art to give away their certificates. Being the most good-natured of busy men, he consented to do so; and thus it came about that one afternoon the Philharmonic Hall was filled to overflowing to see him do it.
>
> Neither Mr. Gladstone nor Mr. Disraeli could have collected such a varied crowd. I think a Bishop was there, but I am not sure. Anyhow the Mayor was there, and leading members of the Corporation, old men and young—women, boys and girls. The police turned out in quite unnecessary numbers. They had come to see Dickens, and so had I, and so had everybody else.
>
> There he was, with that animated face neither pen nor pencil can depict or describe. He was seated at a table crowded with certificates, and it was his business to read out one by one the names of the prize-winners (all I think of the female sex), and then, as each approached the table, to hand her the card. This he did for some time in his usual business-like manner. All of a sudden he stopped—he seemed sorely puzzled, as if he had suddenly come across a name that gave him pause. We all waited breathlessly—devouring him with our eyes, and then, out the name came—it was (I forget the Christian name, it was the surname that caused the rumpus)—it was WELLER.
>
> Without a moment's pause everyone of us was convulsed with merriment. The Bishop (if he was there), the Mayor, the Corporation, the Police—old and young, men, women and children—gave themselves up to uncontrollable laughter. Did I say all? No! There were two exceptions. Dickens himself remained imperturbably grave, as if amazed, and poor Miss Weller, half-way up the Hall, was too taken aback to laugh and looked far more disposed to cry. But as she was evidently a plucky little creature, determined, whatever was happening, to carry her certificate home with her, she continued her progress up to the table, where Dickens received her with a beaming smile, and whispered words of congratulation into her reddened ears; whilst the laughter slowly died down.
>
> What was it all about? What had happened? Nothing, but the sudden, unexpected sound of the name of a character known to everybody in the Hall, in a work, of what is called fiction, proceeding from the lips of the creator of that character. That was all—but it was enough.
>
> I do not suppose Dickens himself gave the incident five minutes' further thought—but for nearly sixty years it has lived in my memory as the greatest spontaneous tribute to genius I have ever seen.
>
> I hope when Miss Weller came to change her name (and she was a comely little creature) she insisted upon having one out of Dickens.

This story was reproduced with the reports of the speeches with sad consequences. For some Dickens scholar challenged its accuracy, affirming, if I recollect Birrell's account rightly, that the incident happened at Birmingham and that Dickens had never taken a part in any public ceremony in Liverpool during Birrell's boyhood. This was a great shock to Birrell, who concluded that his memory had recalled some dream so vivid that he had mistaken it for an actual experience.

His book has suffered in some respects from this delay. It is a delightful book to read, for it sparkles with Birrell's special humour, and as a study of men and manners, at once playful and serious, it is alive from the first page to the last. The picture of his boyhood, his early tastes and the life of his home is enchanting. No man ever paid his debt to his mother with gentler grace. But if it is a more agreeable book than that of any of his colleagues as a political study it is much slighter. In some respects it is disappointingly slight. It would have been interesting if Birrell had said a little more about the collapse of Parnell. The best discussion of Gladstone's action at that time is to be found in Francis Birrell's brilliant little study. Birrell says that Harcourt and Morley were seized with panic and many would agree that the affair was mishandled. Yet it is difficult for anybody who turns to the divorce court proceedings to think that anything or anybody could have saved Parnell. Parnell himself had made that impossible. If Mrs. O'Shea had been content to treat her face as her fortune Parnell would have gone off with her at the first. The disaster came because she wanted to have her lover and yet to keep her hold on her aunt's expected inheritance. The shifts and tricks to which Parnell was reduced because he was weak enough to accept this plan put him at O'Shea's mercy and enabled his enemies to present him in a light at once odious and ridiculous. Birrell asks how many cuckolds Wellington had made. But the Great Duke had never been described in court of law or on the music hall stage flying from one of those cuckolds down a fire-escape. A political leader cannot mismanage his private affairs so recklessly without paying for it. And Parnell was no ordinary political leader. Of the four most powerful men in England, three, Salisbury, Chamberlain and Hartington, hated him with a hatred far beyond the animosities of party. As Birrell says, to ruin him was held in those circles a Christian duty. The squalid stories of the Divorce Court, true and false, would have been the chief topic of Unionist electioneering at the next General Election if Parnell had still been a leader.

Birrell himself with his equable humour was proof against panic or excitement. Yet by a curious fate he was blamed violently at one time for being too cold and at another for being too hot. He was often accused of levity, but in the Boer War, though he was very moderate in his view of the general controversy, he was fiercely attacked because he applied the famous lines of the Sixth Aeneid to the children dying in the concentration camps. He suspected that one or two of the Tories who attacked him had detected a personal allusion in a speech in which he had described a certain type of Tory as Tony Lumpkin.

It is clear from Birrell's pages that he felt that he had pursued three careers without achieving signal success in any one of them. This did not embitter him as it would have embittered most people, because he was supremely happy in his domestic life and he was humorously observant of affairs rather than eager for a leading part in their management. He lacked indeed two qualifications that men in his position need for political success; ambition and a passionate desire for a particular reform. Birrell was happiest when on the back benches, and there he was a Liberal on guard for tolerance and freedom and a generous outlook rather than a missionary or crusader. He was not afraid of large changes, but he was not a man for initiative or a man violently critical of his surroundings. This temper as it happened suited his first task as a Cabinet Minister. His conduct of the Education Bill through the House of Commons was a great performance; a triumph of temper, patience, skill, humour, and good sense. It also helped him in part of his Irish task. But it was not enough for the part that fell to him in 1914. It would have needed a more assertive and energetic nature, a Churchill or a Lloyd George, to stand up to the War Office and stop the criminal folly that destroyed Redmond's work and produced the Easter rebellion.

Birrell's character sketches are delightful and revealing. His pin pricks are happy and neat. He has sudden illuminating touches, such as his surprise on finding Rosebery on his knees unpacking books. He had in mind no doubt Gladstone's favourite way of spending a holiday, rearranging his library. Francis Birrell owed something of his remarkable charm to his mother, but Birrell, as these sketches show, was essentially an affectionate nature. This comes out in his excellent portrait of C. B. It is significant that of all the Irishmen of his time he evidently liked Davitt best. Certainly there has been no politician on either side of the Channel who has better deserved the epithet "pure minded patriot" that Birrell bestows on him.

J. L. HAMMOND

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MACMILLAN

suppression is tantamount to a claim that the judgment of mankind is infallible, a supposition for which history affords little warrant.

Secondly, the suppression of obscene literature presupposes the validity of the belief that sex is in some undefined way wicked and should not, therefore, be mentioned except with extreme circumspection, and to the young not at all. For this belief there is, as far as I can see, no evidence. There is nothing inherently more shocking about the means by which life is produced than about those by which it is maintained. Food maintains life; sex produces it. We may confess to a feeling of pained surprise that the Almighty did not contrive a less unedifying way of continuing the species than what one of Aldous Huxley's characters calls "this business of bouncing buttocks;" but there is nothing very edifying about stuffing solid and liquid substances through a small expanding hole in the bottom of one's face. Yet nobody thinks eating indecent.

Thirdly, assuming the belief to be valid, suppression tends to defeat its own object. Prudery is the fig-leaf of the imagination, and that which is covered inevitably has a greater interest than that which is revealed. Hence, to suppress a book is to give it a fictitious interest. Mr. Craig cites as an example the works of the Marquis de Sade, remarking that "the inaccessibility of these works in this country has I think facilitated the task of those, from Swinburne to the Surrealists, who would inflate them into a serious contribution to some system of philosophy or aesthetics. A glance at the actual pages bursts the bubble." If, in fact, the obscenity laws were abolished, the market for pornography would lose its "bootleg" value. As W. H. Auden, with whom Mr. Craig concludes an admirable list of preliminary quotations, puts it: "The censor shall dream of knickers, a nasty beast."

The objections which I have cited are so rational, the position against which they are directed so irrational, that the question arises, can one reason with it at all? Mr. Craig thinks that one can. He gives us, in the first place, an account of the state of the law in relation to obscenity. He shows us, in the second place, how the law works in practice. It does so arbitrarily and capriciously: Book A is banned, Book B is not. Book X is suppressed on publication; Book Y after it has been on sale for several years because a policeman's wife happens to read it and does not like it. Sometimes the printer is fined; sometimes the publisher; sometimes the author; sometimes all three; and sometimes somebody is imprisoned. Artistic merit is no defence. In the famous *Well of Loneliness* trial, the magistrate announced that "a book might be a fine piece of literature and yet obscene. Art and obscenity were not disassociated at all." One wonders why the magistrate did not suppress the Bible; a much juicier work than the *Well of Loneliness*! Again, there are no experts on obscenity, or rather, as Mr. Craig informs us, it has been ruled that "expert evidence on the issue of obscenity is not admissible." Literary critics, novelists, poets, biologists, sociologists, anthropologists, religious teachers—there is a list of them at the end of Mr. Craig's book—have all appeared as witnesses in cases of obscene libel, or have defended books against banning. "I reject them all," majestically announced the magistrate in the *Well of Loneliness* case, while a Mr. Fulton "contended that it was entirely a question for the magistrate to decide whether a book was obscene or not." And so, apparently, it is—which means that the criterion of obscenity is what happens to shock some old and used-up man, the exuberance of whose imagination is probably proportional to the restrictions upon his practice. Now to feel shocked is quite a harmless form of self-indulgence, but it is not one which should be enjoyed at the expense of the public's reading.

In the third place, Mr. Craig asks how the existing state of affairs can be remedied. The present position is broadly governed by two legal judgments; the first, by Lord Chief Justice Campbell, resulted in the Obscene Publications Act of 1857. Campbell gave an assurance that this measure was "intended to apply exclusively to works written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth and of a nature calculated to shock the common feelings of decency in any well-regulated mind." The Act, therefore, is in effect aimed at pornography, if pornography be defined as the production of works whose main purpose is to excite sexual passion. Against such an act serious literature, as Mr. Craig points out, has little complaint. Pornography is in essence a form of compensation. It is, to quote Mr. Craig, "a substitute for experience and nothing more." There is and always will be a species of sub-literature which seeks to provide substitutes for the satisfactions which are denied to thwarted instincts. Thus crime literature compensates people for the dullness of their lives; snob literature for their lack of social success. In times of scarcity a kind of "feasting" literature appears to compensate people for their hard fare. Pornographic literature belongs to the same class but, as Mr. Craig justly says, it is none of the artist's business to produce works which are a substitute for life, and if the Campbell judgment still held the field, there would be little cause for complaint.

But it doesn't. It has been succeeded by the so-called Cockburn judgment of 1868 which lays down the test of obscenity as "whether the tendency of the matter charged . . . is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall." The test, in other words, is not now one of intention, but of effect, and since it is difficult to assert of any work that mentions sex that it is incapable of doing what is called "harm" to anybody in any circumstances—think of the gusto with which schoolboys read certain passages in the Bible—the Cockburn judgment makes it possible to indict any work, with the result that *Leaves of Grass*, *Poems and Ballads*, *Ulysses*, *Candide*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Moll Flanders*—I choose at random a few of the best-known works from Mr. Craig's Bibliography of banned books—have all, at different times, been banned or restricted for reasons of obscenity. To alleviate the situation it is enough, in Mr. Craig's view, to return to the pre-Cockburn—that is, to the Campbell—position. To cure it, we must produce a sexually educated community; a community, that is to say, that no longer "dreams of knickers." But, as E. M. Forster pertinently asks in his Introduction, who is to educate us? Our pastors and masters are, for the most part, old men who call sour grapes at sex and do their best to ensure that the young shall not enjoy the pleasures that have passed them by. As to the possibility of improvement under Socialism, the records of Labour Governments are not very encouraging. Mr. Forster concludes, "Our only hope of education lies in ourselves, whatever our class, in the individual, in decent personal talk."

Mr. Craig has written an exceedingly valuable book. It is sober, restrained, well-reasoned and very well documented. It is impossible to read it without a feeling of shame for one's countrymen; it is also impossible to read it without a feeling of admiration for a man who, prompted by the desire to make us less shameful than we are, has done so much hard work in a field where the kicks are many and the halfpence few.

C. E. M. JOAD

THE MUSIC GOES ROUND AND ROUND

A Good Time Was Had by All. By STEVIE SMITH. *Cape.* 5*s.*

Miss Stevie Smith's *Novel on Yellow Paper* caught the public in several minds. Wise or wisecracking, tender or tough, who could say? The style puzzled. The music went round and round. Those who cannot enjoy a book without a label were driven to strange comparisons, some deciding that Miss Smith was "very serious" and hooking her on to Sterne; others enjoying her book because it reminded them of Anita Loos; others, again, disapproving for the same reason. One delighted reader went so far as to congratulate Mrs. Woolf on having at last, pseudonymously, found her form.

Novel on Yellow Paper was, in fact, triumphantly itself. I read it twice and liked even its faults. True, it was written in a sometimes weird vernacular which seemed to come half from the *New Yorker* and half from a Hugo conversation book; behind its stream of consciousness one could hear the tapping of the typewriter. But how rare it is to find a really comic novel which is also a novel of sensibility! Mr. Wodehouse may make us laugh uproariously, but after reading his books we are no nearer to that benign schoolmaster in a Norfolk jacket. Humour as a rule excludes intimacy, and the extraordinary thing about *Novel on Yellow Paper* was that it was brilliantly funny and intimate at the same time. It differed, too, from other humorous books of the sort—Mr. Thurber's, say, or the late Clarence Day's—in passages of unexpected beauty. I remember the description of a horse stepping across the shadows in Rotten Row on a spring morning, a daydream about a haystack, a memory from childhood of dripping laurels in a garden, which were perfectly modulated in the author's run-on prose. The defence of her style—if it needed any—would be that it enables her to accomplish so many things, to be witty, frank, whimsical, ironical, reflective, without change of voice. There is nothing synthetic about Miss Stevie Smith.

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BEHIND THE SPANISH BARRICADES

By JOHN LANGDON-DAVIES. April 26th. 260 pages. 5s. net.

The omission of the illustrations and the two final chapters has enabled us to sell this new edition, with a new preface, at a price which brings it within the reach of almost all. The illustrated edition at 12*s.* 6*d.* net is still available.

The same qualities will be found in her verse. Many of the pieces in *A Good Time Was Had by All* have the air of successful impromptu which is dismally lacking in most "light" verse. "Infant," which appeared first, by the way, in the novel, is delightful:

It was a cynical babe
Lay in its mother's arms
Born two months too soon
After many alarms
Why is its mother sad
Weeping without a friend
Where is its father—say?
He tarries in Ostend.
It was a cynical babe. Reader before
you condemn, pause,
It was a cynical babe. Not without cause.

In conversational style this has something of the effect of a triolet—an effect which would be lost with the stricter form. The rhyme at the end gives just enough precision. One reason why so much professional light verse seems artificial is that the rhyme and metre are far too inflexible and heavy for what the verse has to say. Stevie Smith understates, as it were, her poetic means and thus her verse continually surprises by being better than its face value. Two poems published in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—"Freddy" and "Night-time in the Cemetery"—seem to me excellent examples of casual-seeming verse which carries unexpected weight. Their impact is *personal*—like some of Lawrence's *Pansies*, to which, by the way, they might be at times the feminine counterpart. "Eng." and "Bandol (Var)" are *Pansies* with rhyme.

What has happened to the young men of Eng.?
Why are they so lovey-dovey so sad and so domesticated,
So sad and so philoprogenitive
So sad and without sensuality? . . . .

Here is a lyric:

PORTRAIT.

She was not always so unkind, I swear,
And keep this thought that's all I have of her
Who was upon a time my only thought and care.
Sweet memory hid from the light of truth
I'll keep thee, for I would not have thy worth
Questioned in Court of Law nor answer for it on my oath,

But hid in my fond heart I'll carry thee,
And to a fair false thought I'll marry thee,
And when thy time is done I'll bury thee.

Do you find that refreshing? A new twist, too, is given to the cautionary tale:

The wood was rather old and dark
The witch was very ugly
And if it hadn't been for father
Walking there so smugly
I never should have followed
The beckoning of her finger.
Ah me how long ago it was
And still I linger . . .

There is no space to quote the rest of "Little Boy Lost," of which this is the beginning. But here are several epigrams which have the same careless freshness:

ALFRED THE GREAT

Honour and magnify this man of men
Who keeps a wife and seven children on £2 10s.
Paid weekly in an envelope
And yet he never has abandoned hope.

THIS ENGLISHWOMAN

This Englishwoman is so refined
She has no bosom and no behind.

LAMENT OF A SLUG-A-BED'S WIFE

Get up, thou lazy lump, thou log, get up,
For it is very nearly time to sup
And did the Saviour die that thou shouldst be
In bed for breakfast, dinner, lunch and tea?

As a writer in verse or prose Miss Stevie Smith never overbids—and what a merit that is! *A Good Time Was Had by All* is doggerel, doggerel of a peculiarly attractive and personal sort, which contains its own poetry. If you have read *Novel on Yellow Paper* it may surprise you to find that its author can begin and leave off so often in a few lines. This is her briefer, more caustic, aphoristic vein. It makes a delightful interlude before the next instalment of her odd *Work in Progress*.

G. W. STONIER

ON SALE
NEXT MONDAY (APRIL 19)

THE
MAGIC
OF
MONARCHY

by

KINGSLEY MARTIN
(editor, the *New Statesman & Nation*)

Complete day-by-day record of the Abdication crisis—"All the king's horses . . ."—What did the Archbishop mean?—Vicissitudes of the British throne since 1837—What does a king do?—Common sense about the forthcoming Coronation—Reasons for and against retaining a monarchy in England, etc.

The Magic of Monarchy - - - 2/6 net

NELSON

THE ROAD TO OXIANA

The Road to Oxiana. By ROBERT BYRON. *Macmillan.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

A traveller, if you are going to travel with him, must above all be good-tempered and not unnecessarily brave; but if you are going only to read him, quite other qualities become the most important. I should be sorry to have Mr. Byron as a travelling-companion—and I like his books immensely. He is distinguished by voyaging purely in pursuit of beauty. He writes remarkably well; he knows, and cares, a great deal about architecture; and he has an uncommonly sharp tongue which he does not hesitate to exercise. A strong taste for the civilised pleasures does not interfere with a courage and endurance which are excessive, and which would be most exasperating if one were travelling with him. No one who read his brilliant book, *First Russia, then Tibet*, is likely to forget the horrors Mr. Byron suffered by choosing the wrong time of year to enter Tibet. Yet in his new book we find him going off to Persia in the autumn, and trying to get through Afghanistan to Turkestan in December. Dysentery intervened, before he could be frozen to death. He returned for the winter to Meshed and Tehran; spent February and March travelling south to Isfahan, Shiraz and Yezd; in April visited Gumbad-i-Kabus, where he found one of the most beautiful buildings in the world; and at last penetrated to Oxiana—that is—Afghan Turkestan between the Oxus and the Hindu Kush, in May. He was back in Wiltshire on July 8th—a time of year, one may add, when the oases of the Persian plateau are superlatively agreeable.

The Road to Oxiana is illustrated with sixteen excellent photographs. My only complaint is that there are not sixty. Some of the valuable and new information about Firuzabad, Meshed, Herat, Balkh and other Sasanian and Timurid remains requires further illustration. (Perhaps Mr. Byron is reserving most of his photographs for a large work on the architecture of the Middle East.) His comments, like those of all recent travellers in Persia,

is something absolutely new. It appears monthly but is in the form of a pocket-size book of about 100 pages. Each issue contains a specially written study of some 20,000 words on some aspect of world affairs and costs only 6*d.*

THE FIRST NUMBER is written by Margaret Cole and is out to-day

FACT'S CONTRIBUTING EDITORS supervise every issue and their names are a real enough guarantee of the character of the studies. They are: Leonard Barnes, Margaret Cole, Lancelot Hogben, Storm Jameson, George Lansbury, Arthur Calder Marshall, Rudolph Messel, Francis Meynell, and Stephen Spender. Raymond Postgate is General Editor

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A MONOGRAPH A MONTH: 6D

fact

upon the regime enforced by the present Shah are extremely disobliging.

> The Persians have a talent for cutting off their nose to spite their face. They stopped the Junkers' air service because it exhibited foreign superiority. They make roads, but their Customs duties prohibit the import of motors. They want a tourist traffic, but forbid photographing because somebody once published a picture of an Iranian beggar, while conformity with their police regulations is a profession in itself, as I have discovered in the last day or two.

The Persians, who were notable for their politeness and amiability (they might be called the Italians of the East) seem entirely to have changed since Shah Pahlevi began his policy of Westernisation. No doubt it is the fault of Europeans: they have shown themselves as grasping, rude and always ready to brandish their rifles; the Persians are seeking to emulate only our vices, because they have had so little experience of our virtues. Only nine years ago, when I was in Persia, it was the pleasantest country in the world to travel in. Now, by all accounts, it is about the most unpleasant. There are, however, two compensations. The roads, which used to be appalling, now seem to be good; and it is possible for Europeans to go into almost all the mosques, none of which used to be accessible. But if we had had Mr. Byron's courage, we could always have entered, for he disguised himself as a Persian to enter the particularly sacred shrine at Meshed.

The incomparable beauty of the country, of course, remains:

> The beauty of Isfahan steals on the mind unawares. You drive about under avenues of white tree-trunks and canopies of shining twigs; past domes of turquoise and spring yellow in a sky of liquid violet-blue; along the river, patched with twisting shoals, catching that blue in its muddy silver, and lined with feathery groves where the sap calls; across bridges of pale copper brick, tier on tier of arches breaking into piled pavilions; overlooked by lilac mountains, by the Kuh-i-Sufi shaped like Punch's hump and by other ranges receding to a line of snowy surf; and before you know how, Isfahan has become indelible, has insinuated its image into that gallery of places which everyone privately treasures.

Even the best descriptions are far more effective in recalling a memory than in conjuring up a picture never seen; and Mr. Byron's book is almost painfully vivid, if one has had the luck to see any of the landscapes and cities he describes. But it has also made me long to start for Afghanistan, which now treats foreigners much more politely than Persia. And those who have never been tempted by these fawn deserts, barren multicoloured mountain-ranges, and rare, sudden outbursts of tree and flower, will find in *The Road to Oxiana* not only vivid accounts of lovely places, but uncommonly entertaining comments upon human behaviour. It is full of caustic asides on such subjects as the system of passport endorsements—"one of the cruder forms of dishonesty produced by the Foreign Office"; the unsuccessful attempt of Herr Herzfeld, the eminent archæologist, to prevent him taking photographs at Persepolis; and the standard of manners and obligingness on P. and O.s, where he detected, however, an improvement since Italian liners came into competition. A brilliant and very personal book. RAYMOND MORTIMER

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NEW NOVELS

The Wheel Turns. By GIAN DÀULI. Translated by BERNARD MIALL. *Chatto and Windus.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Camilla: or The Fanatic Heart. By RALPH RICKETTS. *Lovat Dickson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Oleander River. By G. B. STERN. *Cassell.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

A fortnight ago I remarked that from the tower of fiction few windows any longer give on to the landscape of ordinary life; and here, as though in answer to my lament, comes a long novel magnificently in touch with the solid brown earth from beginning to end. And from Italy too! a country in which, as in Germany, the springs of artistic life seemed almost dry, the humble inspirations of the artist shouted down by the "inspired" *fortissimi* of Signor Gayda. That this view is more than an agreeable left-wing wish-fulfilment is shown by the frantic efforts of the Italian Government to encourage contemporary native literature and to banish from the book-shops the translations upon which the people have long learnt to rely for their fiction. However we may estimate its success in inspiring a brave new poetry, it is evident that propaganda, left and right alike, rests like a dead weight upon the wayward back of fiction.

The Wheel Turns is the first of Signor Dàuli's works to be translated into English. The publishers, while claiming that the author "possesses a European reputation of some standing" (which I can well believe), omit to provide either the date of publication of the original, its Italian title, or a list of his other works. Splendid! That is the way to set the town talking of Gian Dàuli! But they have employed, in Mr. Bernard Miall, a good translator, his only apparent lapse being the use of the word "vicarage," whose associations seem to me irrevocably English. *The Wheel Turns* is the story, told autobiographically by one Giovannino Penta, of a bourgeois family of Vicenza from about 1880 to about 1930. It is a story of decline and decay: of a grandfather, eccentric and anti-clerical, a successful pawnbroker with a town and a country house; of his ne'er-do-well son, vaguely a professor, vaguely a Socialist, very definitely a sensualist, who gradually whittles away his inheritance; and of a third generation (including Giovannino, the narrator) all alike wretchedly unsuccessful and ineffective, with the exception of the eldest brother Luigi, an intensely unsympathetic character who becomes Prefect of the Kingdom of Italy. At the end of the book insanity and utter destitution close in around the surviving members of the once-prosperous family of Penta.

It sounds, stated in bald outline, a grim narrative, but somehow it is not a depressing one. From that it is saved, not by the character of the hero (a subtle study of amiable weakness and the decay of a natural kindliness totally unbuttressed by principle), but by the abundant life and humour which packs the book from end to end. Every paragraph is unmistakable Italy: a world of clamorous family scenes overlooked by inquisitive neighbours glued to the courtyard windows, of strong smells and shrill screams and succulent, copious, richly appreciated food, of vigorous, full-bosomed women with an inborn and passionate delight in imbroglio for its own sake; a world which in the past expressed itself naturally and almost without exaggeration in the knockabout humour and amorous intrigue of *commedia dell' arte* and *opera buffa*. The two overwhelming interests are money and sex. Both are established at the outset. How revealing is the casual sentence: "Don Luigi went away without a word to anyone, slamming the gate like a creditor"; and as for sex—

> But the great scenes, when the plates flew through the air, when

Fie, Fie, Nursie!

'Now it's time for you to wake up and smoke your Greys.'

How we wish we could be in the fashion and recommend Greys cigarettes as a remedy for some complaint or other! But, unfortunately, we can't think of a single thing they'll cure. They're merely very good cigarettes.

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Footnote. — Twenty ordinary cigarettes a day, says a doctor, can do a smoker no harm. The trouble is that, judging by what one reads, there is hardly such a thing as an ordinary cigarette . . . except Greys.

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terms of abuse were bandied to and fro, followed by tears and shrieks —these scenes were due, alternately, to some real or supposed mistress of my father's, or some gallant of my mother's; so that even when I was quite a little boy I began to suspect, from what I saw at home and outside, that all grown-up people, great and small, if they were not sleeping or working or eating, thought only of one thing, and ran after only one thing, and that everybody must do neither more nor less than what the flies did on the kitchen table, or on my school-books when I was learning my lessons. Only the grown-up people acted a comedy into the bargain.

We are constantly being told that the English race suffers from unnatural sexual repression in its adolescence; Signor Dàuli's book will perhaps prompt a doubt whether the lusty meridional freedom is any more productive of human happiness in the long run. "Of course," says Giovannino, "one's first sexual education is given one by the maidservants"; but his own first actual experience, at the age of 13, was with his cousin Mariannina, a girl of 20. At 17 he submits, half-willingly, to the embraces of Sofia (the daughter of his Uncle Piero's mistress), who bears him a child. Though he washes his hands of Sofia, and allows it to be understood (there is good excuse for the supposition) that the child is his uncle's, Sofia is destined to play the leading role in his later life. The child dies, Sofia vanishes, she becomes a prostitute, Giovannino meets her again at Uncle Piero's grave, they resume their relationship, and, though never exactly in love with her, he becomes accustomed to her presence and unable to do without her. Their association lasts through a long series of poor jobs (travelling agencies for tomato pulp and the like) and even survives the war. It is only killed at last by Giovannino's simultaneous discovery of the depths of squalid promiscuity in which his mistress had once been submerged, and of the appalling fact that the death of his 13-year-old niece in childbirth was caused by Marco, her adored uncle and his own brother. A scene of horrible power and veracity follows. Giovannino, driven crazy by the news, finds himself at last dead drunk "outside the door of my house, as though the house had come to look for me and had suddenly emerged from the darkness to take me by surprise and prevent me from going into another public-house." In a Latin fury of retrospective jealousy, coupled with the drunken notion that he is somehow "avenging" the shocking fate of his niece, he beats Sofia until she is almost insensible. She leaves him for ever, makes a respectable marriage with a former lover, and Giovannino's degradation is complete and final: he has nothing and nobody left in the world.

Once again it is necessary to insist that the book is no grim phantasmagoria of horror, but superbly real with that mysterious sort of reality which must seem so unfair to all those novelists who lack it: I mean the kind that makes us feel of the most shadowy characters on the fringe of the story: "Doubtless they too have a life of their own, and if only the author had time, we should hear it and understand them as we understand the rest." The narrative of Giovannino's youth has a freshness and truth of emotion that often reminded me of a great book, very much out of fashion at the moment, Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe*. And how racy is the patter! The coachman Calisto, for example, beguiling the lazy afternoon with a story, to the sound of the old mare's hoofs and the little bells on her harness:

> "Well, it was a few days to Christmas. One morning when it was still dark and I was cleaning out the stable, I heard someone calling me from the courtyard: 'Calisto. Calisto!' I went out, and there was the Cavalier Anselmi with his face all crooked. . . . 'What can I do for you, Cavaliere?' I says at last, seeing he didn't say anything. 'Do you believe in God?' he says, still with his lips close together, and speaking with difficulty. 'Yes, Signor!' I says. 'That is, so so; enough.'—'Ah,' he says, 'but in what saint do you believe: you people always believe in some saint!'—'Yes,' I says, 'in Saint Luke, patron of cuckolds!'—'But you are a man of honour, Calisto?'—'I think so, Cavaliere, but it don't do to ask the landlord if his wine is good.'—'Well, well, here's ten lire for you.'
>
> "He pulls out the ten lire and stands there silent for a moment with the note in his hand; then he looks about him suspicious-like, as though we were in the piazza on a market-day and he was going to buy a cow, and then he grips me by the arm and says in my ear: 'Calisto, I have left my set of teeth under Signora Maria Canton's pillow!' Ah! Ah! Hi, Bianchella! Hi, Bianchella!"
>
> *Plo-pla, pla-plo!*
> *Din-din-din! Zin-zin!* . . .
> It seems only yesterday! . . .

The opening of *Camilla* makes it clear at once that Mr. Ricketts has the novelist's gift. The very first sentence is arresting: "Marriages made for love are all much alike, but every marriage made for money has its own complications." True or not (and the love-match of Camilla and John does not really bear it out), that is the right sort of way to begin a novel of social life. We are led onwards irresistibly, and the first lap of the course is delightful. The ball at which Camilla meets her slightly more plebeian (but unexpectedly Etonian) lover, the musician John Wolfe, is treated with the easy, graceful movement of an old hand. The greater part of the book relates the mutual probings, sometimes delicate, often ruthless, of a pair of lovers whom nothing less than complete honesty will satisfy. This is the central theme, and the author has handled it with considerable success. The subsidiary currents are on a lower level of interest. The minor characters are good so long as they remain social decorations; but when we are invited to take a serious interest in them we find that they do not really exist: in fact, no one really exists but Camilla and John. It seems unkind to suggest that the proper length for this novel was that of the German *Novelle*, since that is a form English publishers do not encourage. It is a pity, for nothing is more valuable to the young novelist than to ask himself of every incident whether it could be spared. Even in his central story, Mr. Ricketts does not yet know just what to leave out. I recall a brief scene in which Camilla and John, on holiday, help a man to catch a pheasant. It is the sort of thing which figures very properly in diaries and letters to one's old friends, but not in fiction. But Mr. Ricketts has a genuine talent, and it might be worth his while, for the sake of discipline, to try his hand at the short story.

Oleander River is a sunny, Mediterranean romance, which arrived in a glowing jacket as alluring as a travel prospectus. I am afraid that when I come across an efficient novel about the South of France or the Tyrol my critical faculties are lulled as effectively as in a *train de luxe*. People flash past the sunny windows, and they all seem very nice and amusing; and when, in the middle of my copy, I found that the printer had omitted to place any words at all on several successive pages, I didn't mind in the least. It was like waking up after a luxurious little nap to find that one had passed a few stations in one's sleep. The country was still idyllic, the sun still shone.

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HEADS' TALES

A Schoolmaster's Testament. By J. H. BADLEY. *Basil Blackwell.* 7s. 6d.

A Headmaster Reflects. By GUY KENDALL. *Hodge.* 7s. 6d.

The former headmasters of Bedales and of University College School here review their experience and present their conclusions upon the educational situation in England to-day. They may both be described as moderate reformers. Both are distrustful of root and branch educational revolutionaries without being at all complacent about the state of things as they are.

The educational theory produced on speech days and at conferences by puzzled headmasters defending the system to which they have given their lives is a fantastic mixture of practical compromise and idealistic paradox. Inside the school world it seems natural enough—outside, one begins to wonder. At the end of his discussion of the many strange things which make up the English school—fagging, governors, religious instruction, games, politics, career choosing and so on, Mr. Kendall claims that anyone with "vision" can make it effective "in pedestrian curriculum, and masters' meetings and talks with boys and parents." But he gives a rather frightening list of the dangers in the path of the visionary—"the examination system . . . our own failure of nerve . . . any cynical acquiescence in the commercial outlook of the time." It is hard to do valuable work inside a system in which you thoroughly disbelieve, but that is the achievement of most good schoolmasters.

Mr. Badley begins with the statement of his theme "that education is experience and that a school's function is to give experience in the most helpful form." University College School under Mr. Kendall and Bedales under Mr. Badley have both been tentative variations on the scheme of experience provided by the nineteenth-century public school. But both these headmasters seem more concerned with making pleasanter and more reasonable the world of the pupil while he remains a pupil than with preparing him to accept or alter the queer world of the adult.

There is in Mr. Badley's book a description of Rugby fifty years ago which makes one wonder how any reasonable person ever survived it. Practical reformers like Mr. Badley, economic necessities, the rise of the secondary day school and occasional stirrings of the public conscience have made some changes in the normal conduct of schools, but anyone with experience of "ordinary" public or secondary schools to-day will agree on reading this chapter that the "spirit," or, to use a cant phrase, the "ideology," has suffered little real change. Mr. Badley writes that "scholarship, good breeding and leadership no longer form the whole of our educational ideal." In fact the led are being educated as well as the leaders, the employees as well as the employers. This situation raises problems which variations on the old public school model do nothing to solve. The playing fields of Eton may be good preparation for winning battles, but how shall a nation of shopkeepers be introduced to shopkeeping? Mr. Kendall thinks that the public schoolboy's irrational prejudice against retail trade should be overcome by education, and he is depressed by the parents of only children who want them to find safe berths in banks or insurance offices. But the fate of the vast majority of those who have a secondary education must be some dull daily routine job in which self-expression is impossible or undesirable. Mr. Badley's educational theory—and that of most progressive schoolmasters—is based on liberty, responsibility and self-realisation. In a State where everyone could be an artist, this might be a practical ideal, but in England to-day it is surely Utopian. Faced by the charge of being unpractical, the progressive schoolmaster pleads "education for leisure." The machine produces wealth and unemployment which open up vistas of leisure-time mediaeval craftsmanship. But must we prepare for a civilisation in which the universal hobby ousts the threatened universal opiate? Can the efforts of schoolmasters spent outside the hours devoted to the school certificate make Morris's *News from Nowhere* a more likely future than Huxley's *Brave New World?* "What a wonderful thing a stamp collection must be or the construction with one's own hands of a home radio set!" It is the chimp. in *His Monkey Wife* speaking, and the irony hits the modern school hard.

Mr. Kendall's attitude to the civilisation into which his pupils were to be launched and to the traditional convention of the public school is typically expressed in his remarks on O.T.C.s. His own school prospectus stated candidly that the O.T.C. was compulsory and that it existed "for the defence of the Nation, the Empire, and the Covenant of the League of Nations." But he makes it clear that even for this laudable object he doubts whether military instruction for schoolboys is entirely desirable. He could certainly never be guilty of the childish conscience-salving theory of many teachers that O.T.C.s are good because they make boys dislike militarism. He believes in undenominational religious instruction but shows an admirable unwillingness to force any belief on any boy. He has no illusions about compulsory chapel. Perhaps the most valuable thing Mr. Kendall has to say is to be found in his chapter "Does Ignorance Matter?" He has no patience with that demand for pseudo-omniscience which our educational system has crystallised in the School Certificate.

A Schoolmaster's Testament leaves behind it a certain feeling of unreality. Bedales is clearly a considerable achievement, but one feels that Mr. Badley has defended reforms introduced in the new schools without giving sufficient details of how it has all worked out and without really going back to first principles. His book ends with two appendices. One—of three pages—is entitled "Changes Desirable in the School Certificate Examination," and the other is a list of "Scholarships, etc., won by Bedalians at the Universities during the last six years." They prove that the new schools are still far too close to the old. FREDERICK LAWS

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SHORTER NOTICES

The Law of Political Uniforms, Public Meetings and Private Armies (With a Treatise on the Law of Public Order, Breach of the Peace, Unlawful Assembly and Riot). By JOSEPH BAKER. *Just and Co.* 7s. 6d.

The Law Relating to Public Meetings and Processions. By ALFRED CREWE and EVELYN MILES. *Pitman.* 5s.

Meetings, Uniforms and Public Order. *Jordan and Sons.* 6d.

The appearance of these three books of varying length and price is opportune in view of the recent passing of the Public Order Act. They will be of considerable service to political and industrial societies. The first volume, moreover, is a careful and complete examination of the law in relation to these special problems. It is a carefully annotated and valuable treatise. The second volume has some useful material, but it shows signs of hurried compilation. Thus, on page 11, the

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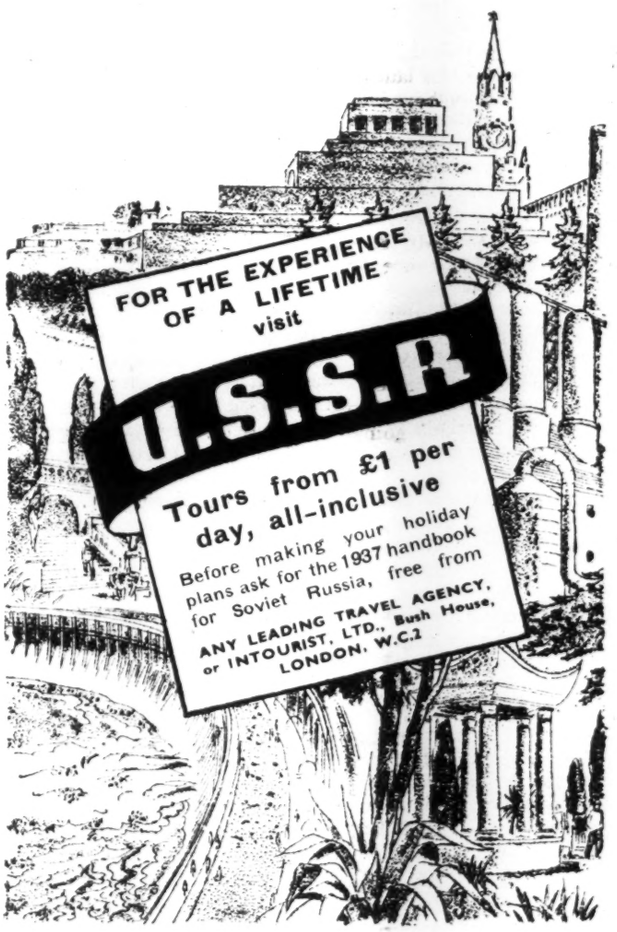
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Basil Butler

author says, "In the case of meetings held on private premises, the police have no power to enter except by leave of the occupier of the premises or promoters of the meetings, or when they have good reason to believe that a breach of the peace is being committed." This is an accurate statement of the law as it was prior to 1935, but strangely enough, the book contains no reference to the important judgment of Thomas *v.* Sawkins by which the law in this respect was substantially altered. This omission makes the book far from reliable as a guide for the use of political and other propagandists. On the other hand, Mr. Baker's larger volume and the small 6*d.* pamphlet published by Messrs. Jordan and Sons both contain references to this important case and to the almost equally important judgment of Duncan *v.* Jones. The first and third books may, therefore, be confidentially recommended to all those who are concerned with the problems relating to public meetings, processions, unlawful assembly, riot and all the implications of the Public Order Act.

The Quest of the Romanoff Treasure. By ARMAND HAMMER. *Williams and Norgate.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The lurid black and gold jacket and the title suggest that this book might be the latest issue of the Crime Club. A serious foreword by Walter Duranty and the opening sentence "Business is business but Russia is romance," still leaves us uncertain and as we read the book we find a secret struggle in the author's mind between business and romance that ends in both becoming the same. Dr. Armand Hammer went to the Soviet Union in 1921 from America for the romantic purpose of helping in the famine relief and the commercial one of arranging for the payment of medical chemical equipment supplied by a firm controlled by his family. In the famine area he arranged for the exchange of stores of mineral and furs, etc., for grain and from that time forward business comes first. When he returned to Moscow he found himself the only person able to use the new opportunity for concessions under the N.E.P. He became the first concessionaire and took over an asbestos mine and later built a pencil factory. In describing both these ventures he pays a tribute to Russian trade union methods of negotiation and to the laws enforcing the education, health and general welfare of the workers. With the profits from his share of reconstructing Russia, he acquired a small collection of Romanoff jewels, though we are not told about this until the last two chapters. However Dr. Hammer was or was not affected by Russian idealism it cannot be denied that he accomplished more for Communism than a thousand humanitarians with no financial strings to pull, and although he adds nothing to our detailed knowledge of Soviet reconstruction of Russia, he has left a readable record of how a tolerant capitalist can co-operate with a Communist State in the period when it is experimenting to find the balance between individual freedom and central control. Dr. Hammer, indeed, played the part of one of Mr. Wells' ideal business men for whom trade transcends the barriers of political and national fears and who is not afraid to put profits above the fear of enriching the proletariat. In fact this book is an epic of enlightened self-interest that may tempt other capitalists to invest in Communism for the mutual benefit of both sides in the class war.

Force or Reason. By HANS KOHN. *Oxford Press.* 6*s.* 6*d.*

The Professor of History at Smith College surveys with admirable lucidity and learning three important factors in the chief world issue of to-day. The cult of force, the dethronement of reason, and "the crisis of imperialism" are his themes, and his treatment of the second is masterly. The exposition of the growth of German nationalism as romanticism and folk inspiration, and of the influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is especially well done. The present world crisis, itself "totalitarian," is ascribed, truly enough, to the discrepancy between the rapidity of material and the slowness of intellectual and moral progress. A pertinent prophecy of conditions in 1930 made a century earlier encourages us not to lose hope. Apparently impassable roads may yet be trodden by mankind.

The Place of Edward II in English History. By J. F. TOUT. Second edition, revised by HILDA JOHNSTONE. *Manchester University Press.* 21*s.*

Professor Tout's Ford lectures on Edward II marked an epoch in fourteenth-century studies, and Professor Hilda Johnstone's revised reprint testifies to their enduring importance. The complete digestion and assimilation of Professor Tout's work by historical science may be regarded, however, as still in the future.

Many Sides

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GRAMOPHONE NOTES

FIRST I wish to apologise for a couple of errors which I made in my last article. There are twelve *Concerti Grossi* in Handel's *op.* 6, so that the Boyd Neel String Orchestra have six still left to record. It also appears that the Budapest Quartet made a fine recording of Beethoven's *Quartet in E minor, op.* 59, as recently as last December, so that I had no reason to call for a re-recording of that work. How these records escaped my notice at the time I cannot imagine.

The outstanding recordings this month are of two symphonies, Haydn in *B flat, No.* 102, played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky (H.M.V. DB3125–7); and Mozart in *B flat* (K319), played by Edwin Fischer and his Chamber Orchestra (H.M.V. DB3083–5). The first is quite one of Haydn's most gracious symphonies, full of those surprises that make this composer so endlessly fascinating. The adagio opening has a romantic quality that looks forward to Bruckner. The rendering is exceptionally vital and sparkling. The Mozart symphony, which is far from being a hackneyed one, is an extremely attractive work in all movements. Played after the Haydn, it brings out vividly the feminine quality in Mozart's imagination, as opposed to the masculine in Haydn's. The playing is admirable. It is a pleasure to salute this newly constituted little orchestra, which seems a very highly finished ensemble, having the expressive delicacy of Fischer's own piano playing. Sir Adrian Boult, with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, contributes Berlioz's *King Lear Overture* (H.M.V. BD3093–4; the *Polovtsi March* from Borodin's *Prince Igor* on the last side). Comparing this version with that made by Sir Hamilton Harty not long ago, one notices a greater clarity and precision of detail; but Sir Hamilton Harty's interpretation was more supple and expressive, and succeeded better in welding the somewhat bitty material into a whole. Of the two versions, then, I prefer the latter myself; but opinions will certainly differ on this point. The piece itself is, though an early work, very characteristic of Berlioz indeed, elusive and irritatingly inconsequent, but full of beauty and interest. Sir Thomas Beecham has inspired the London Philharmonic Orchestra to a splendidly alive performance of Nicolai's *Merry Wives of Windsor Overture* (Col. LX596). This is delightful music, of course—the mid-nineteenth-century operatic overture at its best; but it is impossible not to feel, at the end, with one's ears buzzing, that Nicolai's orchestration was not of a very refined order.

Beethoven's *Quartet in F, op.* 135, is a very strange work indeed—even for the final period; and it is a problem to preserve and convey its unity. The material is extremely compressed and the form more conventional than that of the other late quartets; it resembles a large picture seen through the wrong end of a telescope. The problem, therefore, is how to express the large musical ideas within the small frame given to them, and yet not to produce the effect of miniature. On the whole the Léner Quartet have

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NEWS FROM SPAIN

THE CHRISTIAN DELEGATION will report to public meeting, Friends House, Euston Road, 8 p.m., Weds. April 21st. Speakers: MR. CLEMENT ATTLEE, M.P., Leader of the Labour Party; DEAN OF CANTERBURY; REV. FATHER IREDELL; PROF. JOHN MACMURRAY; MISS MONICA WHATELEY; MR. D. R. DAVIES. Admission free. Reserved seats 1s. Tickets obtainable at door.

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succeeded well (Col. LX598–600). They have got rid of some of the rather dreadful smoothness that used to afflict their playing, and the result is particularly beneficial in this case, though I feel that they take the Lento a little too fast: much depends on giving adequate weight to that movement. Schubert's *Trio in B flat, op. 99*, is probably the general public's favourite chamber music work (though Schubert himself preferred the subsequent *Trio in E flat*), and as such it required a re-recording. (It is, by the way, erroneously labelled as being in "B major.") The Elly Ney Trio give a performance which is good enough in tone, but lacks finesse; and I see no justification for the sentimental slowing-up of the second subject of the first movement. However, this is a set worth the money (Decca X157–61).

There are two excellent vocal records this month. One contains the *Letter Duet* from Act 3 of Mozart's *Figaro*, sung by Viorica Ursuleac and Erna Berger, and *Reich' mir die Hand* from the same composer's *Don Juan*, sung by Erna Berger and Heinrich Schlusnus (Decca DE7070). This is a charming record, exquisitely sung. Elizabeth Schumann gives us Schubert's *Litanei* and *Liebesbotschaft* (H.M.V. DA1546). The first is sung with wonderful tenderness, the second with equally Elizabethan lightness. On a different plane, I can recommend Richard Tauber and orchestra in two numbers from a light opera called *Rossini in Naples*, the music of which is evidently a refurbishment of some of Rossini's more immediately attractive airs. Tauber makes the most of the sugary charm of *Ach manche vergangene Nacht* and of the brio of *La Danza*, which is better known in the form of the Tarantella from *La Boutique Fantasque* (Parl. RO20334).

DANCE RECORDS.—The best version of *Pennies from Heaven* I have heard is that of Bing Crosby (Br. 02316), who gives a memorably voluptuous account of a not very distinguished tune. The same may be said of his even more recent *Hawaiian Paradise* (Br. 02389). Another number from the *Pennies from Heaven* film, *The Skeleton in the Cupboard*, is well done, in the hot style, by Louis Armstrong (Decca F6145); there is not much in the tune, but those who saw the film will probably like the record. There are three records specially to be recommended for dancing purposes: *Lookin' Around Corners for You*, played by Tommy Dorsey (H.M.V. BD5181), *Boo Hoo*, by Guy Lombardo (H.M.V. BD5192), and *Let's Swing It*, by Ray Noble (H.M.V. BD5186). The last is particularly good. *Smoke Dreams*, from *After the Thin Man*, is not very interesting, but in view of its topicality should be mentioned: Benny Goodman does his best with it (H.M.V. B8547). I was glad to see that that excellent, almost classic, dance tune, *Mood Indigo*, had been revived: Clyde McCoy does it well (Col. DB5328). *May I Have the Next Romance* is possibly best heard in the Ambrose version (Decca F6260), and the same band carry off the prize in *The Night is Young* (Decca F6369). The charm of Gracie Fields' singing is well set off by *There's a Small Hotel* (Decca I6331), but some may prefer Jack Whiting's version of this song (Col. DB1687), on the obverse of which is *On Your Toes*.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

It is good to enjoy your own concert when you will, with a programme chosen to suit your mood. A gramophone can always provide the concert, but the enjoyment will only come with it when the gramophone is very good indeed—so good that an experienced concert-goer can play again a well remembered work without sensing a great loss of significance and beauty, and certainly without suffering the acute aural pain of badly distorted tone. Our acoustic gramophones and our radio-gramophones are constructed individually by hand, and tuned with the greatest care by concert-goers for concert-goers.

Of course, good records are also necessary, and in the choice of these our little book "The Art of Record Buying" will be found extremely helpful. A copy will be gladly sent on request.

EMG HAND-MADE GRAMOPHONES, Ltd.
11 Grape St., London, W.C.2
Tel.: Temple Bar 7166-7

Week-end Competitions

No. 370

Set by Ivor Brown

A new Shakespeare play has recently been made by putting together selected passages and lines from several of Shakespeare's plays. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best new Shakespeare Sonnet made of single lines taken unchanged from Shakespeare's Sonnets. In order to facilitate checking of lines, competitors should put opposite each line the number of the Sonnet from which it has been drawn.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, April 23.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of the last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 368

Set by H. D. Waley

A first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea are offered for three 100-word descriptions of heaven as visualised by a Dictator, a Film Magnate and a Reasonable Being.

Report by H. D. Waley

Evidently we live in a Dictator-conscious and Film-conscious, but not in an Eternity-conscious epoch. It might be said of almost all the entrants that although they attacked the first and second parts of this competition with some zest, they clearly felt that the third was introducing them to a problem which they had never thought about before and didn't particularly want to think about now. More than one answered in a single word—Oblivion. The myth-makers of old must have been made of sterner—or at any rate, more ingenious—stuff. However, the Dictator and the Film Magnate made fair sport. Several competitors made good play with the strained situation arising from the fact that the Dictator finds the seat of power already occupied. The unfortunate Archangel Gabriel figures as Goebbriel for the Dictator and Clark Gabriel for the Film Magnate.

No new light having been shed on a Reasonable Being's Heaven, I suggest that the prize money be divided equally between W. Leslie Nicholls' Dictator, which smacks convincingly of megalomania, and "Benjamin's" Film Magnate, which catches with hideous fidelity the crescendo rhythm of the cinema trailer.

THE DICTATOR

1. And I saw My new Heaven, for the first non-totalitarian heaven was passed away.
2. And all men spoke with one tongue, which was mine, and were clad in shirts of one colour, which was mine.
3. And I heard loud-speakers calling from every cloud—"This is your Leader.
4. "He will wipe all doubts from your mind, and all thoughts from your brain.
5. "There shall be no more Parliaments, nor any voting, for he shall be leader for ever and ever."
6. The walls of the city were built of the petrified bodies of traitors, and the streets thereof were of synthetic rubber.

LESLIE W. NICHOLLS

Company Meeting

DUNLOP RUBBER COMPANY, LIMITED

SIR J. GEORGE BEHARREL'S ADDRESS

THE thirty-eighth Ordinary General Meeting of the Company was held on Wednesday, April 14th, in London. Sir J. George Beharrel presided, and after regretting the absence through illness of the Chairman, The Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Geddes, G.C.B., G.B.E., K.C.B., made a brief survey of the period since the onset of the World Economic Crisis at the end of 1929, which had come to be regarded as the peak year of the pre-slump period. Continuing, he referred to the price of rubber, quoting Sir Eric Geddes in showing that a rise in price was not a favourable factor for the Company. After touching on the efforts of the Committee for the Regulation Scheme, he continued, saying (in part): During the year arrangements were made to speed up the completion of the Company's accounts, and the Directors have been able to present them much earlier than in the past. This, I feel sure, will meet with your approval. The net profit of the Dunlop Rubber Company for 1936 amounts to £1,502,000, compared with £1,288,000 for the preceding year, representing an increase of £214,000. With the balance brought forward from 1935, namely, £590,000, there is a total available for appropriation of £2,092,000. You will observe that there has been transferred to Taxation Reserve £395,000, and the Directors have deemed it prudent to transfer to General Reserve £100,000 and to the Reserve for Contingencies £150,000. After providing for the Preference Dividends, the Board is enabled to recommend a dividend of 8 per cent. on the Ordinary Stock and a bonus of 1 per cent., and this dividend and bonus will be paid on the 19th April, which is very much earlier than ever before.

There is one point which I would like to make clear, and that is as regards the Taxation Reserve which you will observe at the 31st December last stood at £566,000, compared with £704,000 at the 31st December, 1935. The reason for this decrease is that various assessments of back years, awaiting final settlement, have been paid up during the past year. The total amount to be appropriated to the Taxation Reserve has been calculated on exactly the same basis as in the past.

This statement shows a marked improvement in the general financial position of the Company. For example, the Surplus and Reserves show an increase of £800,000 over 1933. The Surplus of Current Assets over Current Liabilities of the Dunlop Rubber Company is up £1,250,000 at a total of £4,443,000. Taking the Consolidated figures, the increase is £2,031,000 at a total of £10,098,000.

COTTON AND RUBBER.

Last year the Chairman told you that the output of the Cotton Mills during 1935 had been below that of the previous year, mainly because of reduced demands from one of our Associated Companies overseas. I am glad to say that the results for 1936 were very satisfactory, due to all-round increased demands.

The net profit of the Plantations Company for the year represents an improvement of £88,000 over that of the preceding year. The yield from the budded area continues to be very satisfactory, and during the year 3,445 acres of budded rubber were brought into tapping. Growth on the immature area is very good, and a large additional acreage will come into tapping this year. The latex business of the Company made considerable progress during the year, shipments constituting a record.

TYRE DIVISION.

In spite of the fact that new Dunlop Factories Overseas are manufacturing for several markets which were formerly supplied from Fort Dunlop, the amount of rubber used at Fort Dunlop in 1936 exceeded all previous records. Our sales of giant tyres, both to commercial vehicle manufacturers and to dealers, were in excess of 1935, and the aggregate 'bus miles run on tyres supplied by us on the mileage basis showed an increase on the previous year. With regard to passenger car tyres, our sales to manufacturers were fully maintained, but there was a decrease in our sales to dealers which, however, did not represent any loss of our relative position in the market.

The Motor Cycle industry continued its progress, and the Company's sales kept pace with it. The expansion of the Cycle industry also continues.

Our turnover in aeroplane equipment during 1936 again showed an improvement, and we are continuing to obtain a substantial proportion of the orders in connection with the present re-armament programme.

There is a greatly increased demand for specialised tyre equipment for horse-drawn vehicles, tractors, barrows and agricultural implements, which a few years ago were not provided with pneumatic tyres. We have had a record year, and with constant experiment and research, I believe that this comparatively new development of our Company will become of increasing value. We have a most complete range of tyre and general accessories. Our sales for the year 1936 were higher than ever before, and now represent an important sales volume.

Our Dunlopillo upholstery is another section which in 1936 created new sales records. Practically all new public passenger-carrying vehicles are now equipped with Dunlopillo. Manchester deals with the supply of theatre seating, mattresses and domestic upholstery generally. In this field also 1936 showed substantially increased sales. During the year we introduced a new mattress, the "Deep Six." We claim that this is the most luxurious mattress now offered to the public and it has had a most encouraging reception.

Another novelty which we have introduced is the rubber wing for passenger-carrying vehicles.

The general usage of tyres of both cars and commercial vehicles continues to expand, and this should offset the reduction of replacement volume caused by improved tyre life. The Board and the Management and Staff of the Company appreciate warmly the co-operation received from the Trade.

We are faced with price competition, and whilst we make every attempt by our example to secure stabilised trading conditions, competition of an uneconomic nature frequently occurs. You may rest assured that everything possible will be done to protect your interests. Experience in certain other countries has shown how disastrous a policy of volume regardless of profits can be to the Industry.

The rubber products group, which embraces footwear, general rubber goods, garments and sports goods, plays an important and increasing part in the broadening of the Company's basis, to which I have referred. The improved results from this group in recent years are a most encouraging feature of our operations.

The Chairman then referred to severe competition from overseas, the dumping in this country of Canadian-made goods, in particular footwear, which was also imported from Hong Kong. He turned to overseas business and said that the position of the Company in France was strengthened, that conditions in Germany were still abnormal, that in America there was a definite trend towards the maintenance of a more reasonable price-level, and that conditions in Canada, Japan and Australia had improved. The good prospects foreseen for the South African Factory had been fully realised, and the rate of progress of the new Indian Factory was fully equal to that of the South African company at the same stage of development. Quantity sales in all main lines in Ireland had exceeded expectations and the profit position was satisfactory. The Board was satisfied that the profits derived from the new factories would more than make up for any export business lost through the closing of the markets concerned.

Continuing, he said: It is remarkable how we have been able to maintain the profit of our export business in spite of manifold difficulties.

RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYEES.

It was always Sir Eric's pleasure to refer to the satisfactory relations which the Company enjoys with its staff and employees of all grades. I am glad to be able to say that these have continued during 1936 and I would like again, on your behalf, to thank all those employed by the Company for the loyal service which they have rendered. It is the desire of your Board to maintain as satisfactory a standard of wages and of conditions of employment as the circumstances of the Industry will allow, and here I should like to mention that the Board has under consideration the possibility of introducing a Contributory Pension Scheme for all grades of the Company's employees, operatives as well as staff. Indeed, your Board consider that the conversion of our various existing non-contributory schemes into a Contributory Pension Scheme will be a truly conservative measure, as tending to have a stabilising effect, which should be of great value to the Company. The year 1938—the Company's Jubilee Year—will be a most suitable date for its introduction.

PROSPECTS.

He then referred to the election to the Board of Mr. John L. Collyer, the Controller of Manufacture to the Dunlop Group of Companies, and went on to say: I have mentioned the obstacles which still exist to the development of Export Trade and the difficulties caused by the competitive position here and elsewhere. I have dwelt too at length on the uncertainties in regard to our principal raw material. In five years the price of rubber has increased more than six times; due both to the operation of the Rubber Regulation Scheme and to the general trend of raw commodity prices. If the turn of the tide when it comes is not very gradual, all manufacturers (not only in this industry) will, as in the past, be faced with the serious problem of the value of inventories of raw materials and finished products. We are engaged in a highly competitive business. Two of our major raw materials—Rubber and Cotton—are subject to regulation of one kind or another. We are operating all over the world, and no one with any knowledge of International Trade, with its quotas, currency risks and embargoes, would deny the need for continued prudence. Although, therefore, there are factors in the excellence of our own organisation and the great goodwill of the "Dunlop" name, which incline your Board to view the future with confidence, it is still necessary to continue the conservative policy of strengthening the Company's financial position.

The report and accounts were adopted.

THE FILM MAGNATE
"HEAVEN."
A Competition Production.
Directed by :—Simon T. Peter.
Gowns by :—Request.
Musical Director :—Harpo.

All-star cast ! 100 per cent. all talking, all harping, all dancing !
Biggest spectacle ever seen, co-starring :—
Fred Astra with "Top Halo"
and
Miss Mae West who is "No Angel"
with
The Heavenly Choir.
Seize your opportunity of a seat at this immortal show !
It's terrific ! !
IT'S STUPENDOUS ! ! !
IT'S
"HEAVEN"

"BENJAMIN"

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 224.—CHESS IN BARCHESTER
By C. H. O'D. Alexander

Visiting the Barchester Chess Club I saw this rather extraordinary table of results.

		Played.	Won.	Lost.	Drawn.	Points.
1.	Alaska	8	6	1	1	25
2.	Casabianca ..	8	7	1	0	24
3.	Gaffer	8	2	4	2	23
4.	Batterremdown ..	8	4	4	0	20
5.	Hedgehogge ..	8	2	3	3	19
	Woodpusher ..	8	3	3	2	19
7.	Alkaline	8	4	3	1	14
	Dunder	8	1	5	2	14
9.	Buffer	8	0	5	3	12

"Well, you see," explained the secretary, "we graded the players into 3 groups of 3 according to strength. A certain number of points are awarded for beating a player of your own class, more for beating a player of one class higher and less for beating a player of one class lower and still more or still less if the player is two classes higher or lower. What's that ? Oh, in the case of a draw, each player scores half of what he would get for a win—we allot points so that fractions cannot occur. The numbers of points awarded are—oh, excuse me, I must catch Prof. Hedgehogge before he leaves ; steady player, the old chap, never loses to a player in a lower class. I'll tell you the rest later." Unfortunately I had to go before the return of the secretary, but managed to reconstruct the complete sheet of results. What was it and what was the method of scoring ?

PROBLEM 222.—HOLIDAYS (OLD STYLE)

The problem can be solved, as usual, by inference—making any of the clues one's starting-point. I agree with several solvers that this problem is perhaps the best of its kind so far offered.

The answer is :

Name.	*Residence.*	*Holidays.*
Mr. Bognor	*Clacton*	*Penzance*
„ *Clacton*	*Sandown*	*Hastings*
„ *Dover*	*Hastings*	*Bognor*
„ *Hastings*	*Torquay*	*Dover*
„ *Penzance*	*Dover*	*Torquay*
„ *Sandown*	*Bognor*	*Clacton*
„ *Torquay*	*Penzance*	*Sandown*

PROBLEM 221—DOLLARPLUSH

A set of Low's cartoons goes to : Robert Gold, 88 Elgin Crescent, W.11.

Four points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

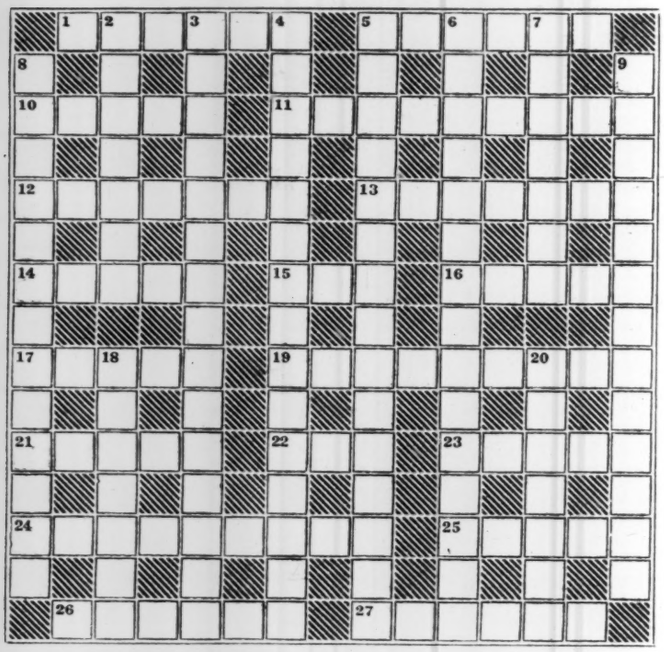
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 371

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Miss Yvonne Fraser Smith, 3 Thurloe Place Mews, S.W.7

ACROSS

1. A provisional shopkeeper.
5. He gets a stride in his profession.
10. You can see it in any useful microscope.
11. Again a cur makes for the country.
12. Result of a botanist heating a poker no doubt.
13. O the Greeks had a word for it.
14. He played a princely game of cricket.
15. Maid of the Mountain.
16. He captured Acrasia.
17. One needs little in France to make one caress it.
19. Am slaving for this result.
21. With a view to having it set aside.
22. Initial description of nautical reticence.
23 (rev.). Describes Milton's hungry sheep who look up.
24. Trained rapidly.
25. Flies after summer.
26. In such cases it is usual to pack up.
27. 25 was one.

DOWN

2. Under inclination I take on the plant.
3. Has room to itself as it turns out, in a playful way.
4. Formula for infant circulation inducing sneezing.
5. One who masters no profession.
6. Vehicles of 2 h.p.
7. "Myself when young did—frequent Doctor & Saint. . . ."
8. Dry form of sauce.
9. Man is only a mug bravely got up.
18. One would always expect the downfall of such a visitor.
20. A broken flint about I see.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

B	A	C	K	S	E	A	T	■	T	R	U	I	S	M
A	■	A	■	H	■	R	■	R	■	E	■	N	■	A
B	U	R	N	I	N	G	Q	U	E	S	T	I	O	N
Y	■	K	■	P	■	U	■	S	■	E	■	T	■	O
■	M	I	N	S	T	E	R	S	■	T	R	I	E	R
B	■	N	■	H	■	S	■	I	■	■	■	A	■	H
O	R	G	E	A	T	■	M	A	L	V	O	L	I	O
A	■	■	■	P	■	A	■	N	■	O	■	■	■	U
T	O	P	B	E	R	T	H	■	S	L	O	P	E	S
H	■	R	■	■	■	T	■	S	■	C	■	Y	■	E
O	B	O	E	S	■	E	N	C	H	A	N	T	S	■
U	■	G	■	N	■	S	■	H	■	N	■	H	■	A
S	I	G	N	O	F	T	H	E	Z	O	D	I	A	C
E	■	E	■	R	■	S	■	M	■	E	■	A	■	E
S	I	D	L	E	D	■	P	E	A	S	A	N	T	S

London Amusements

MATINEES

All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

ALDWYCH. Jane Eyre. Wed., Thurs. & Sat.

APOLLO. London After Dark. Tu., Sat.

CAMBRIDGE. 1066 And All That. Th., Sat.

COLISEUM. The Vagabond King. Sat.

COMEDY. Busman's Honeymoon. Tu., F.

DRURY LANE. Careless Rapture. Wed., Sat.

DUCHESS. Mile Away Murder. Wed., Sat.

DUKE OF YORK'S. Night Alone. Wed., Sat.

GARRICK. The Two Bouquets. Tu., Fri., Sat.

GLOBE. "Candida." Wed. & Sat.

HIPPODROME. "Big Business." Th., Sat.

HIS MAJESTY'S. Balalaika. Wed. & Sat.

LITTLE. Cornelia Otis Skinner. W., Th., S., 2.45

PEOPLE'S PAL. Love from a Stranger. S., 5.

PLAYHOUSE. Whiteoaks. Wed., Th., Sat.

QUEEN'S. Post Road. Sat.

ST. MARTIN'S. Suspect. Tues., Fri.

SAVILLE. Over She Goes. Sats.

STRAND. The Squeaker. Wed. & Sat.

WESTMINSTER. Anna Christie. Wed., Sat.

WHITEHALL. Anthony & Anna. Wed., Sat.

WYNDHAM'S. George & Margaret. W., S.

THEATRES

ALDWYCH. Nearing 250 perfs. Tem. 6404.
8.30 (Ex. Mons.) Mats., Wed., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.
JANE EYRE
CURIGWEN LEWIS. REGINALD TATE.

APOLLO. (Ger. 2663.) Evgs., 8.30. Tues. & Sat., 2.30.
MARION LORNE & WALTER HACKETT'S prodn.
LONDON AFTER DARK
by WALTER HACKETT.

CAMBRIDGE. Tem. Bar. 6056.
EVGS., 8.30. Mats., THURS., SATS., 2.30.
1066 AND ALL THAT
A Musical Revue of English History.

COLISEUM, Charing X. Tem. Bar 3161. Evgs., 8.15.
Mats., WEDS., THURS., & SATS., 2.30.
THE VAGABOND KING (Last Week).
Mon., April 19th, at 8.15 **"ON YOUR TOES"**

COMEDY. 8.30. Mats., Tues., Fri., 2.30. Whi. 2578.
ANMER HALL presents
"BUSMAN'S HONEYMOON"
By DOROTHY L. SAYERS & M. ST. CLARE BYRNE.

DRURY LANE. Evgs., 8.0. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
IVOR NOVELLO, DOROTHY DICKSON,
ZENA DARE in
CARELESS RAPTURE

DUCHESS. (Tem. 8243.) 8.30, Wed., Sat., 2.30.
MILE AWAY MURDER
by ANTHONY ARMSTRONG
(Author of "*Ten Minute Alibi*").

DUKE OF YORK'S. Tem. 5122. 8.30, W., S., 2.30.
NIGHT ALONE
with RICHARD BIRD.
"A Night of Laughs."—*Daily Mail.*

GARRICK. OVER 275 PERFS. (Tem. 4601.)
8.30 (Ex. Mons.). Mats., Tues., Fri., Sat., 2.30.
THE TWO BOUQUETS
"LOVELIEST PLAY IN LONDON."—*S. Dispatch.*

GLOBE. Ger. 1592. EVENINGS, 8.30.
Mats., WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY at 2.30.
BERNARD SHAW'S
"CANDIDA"

HIPPODROME. Ger. 3272. Evgs., 8.15.
Mats., Thurs., Sats., at 2.30. BOBBY HOWES in
"BIG BUSINESS"
VERA PEARCE. WYLIE WATSON. BERTHA BELMORE.

HIS MAJESTY'S. (Whi. 6606.) EVGS., 8.15.
BALALAIKA A Musical Play.
Mats., WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS, 2.30.

LITTLE. (Tem. 6501). Evgs. (exc. Mon.), 8.45.
Mats., Wed., Thurs. & Sat., 2.45 (2 weeks only)
CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER
in Series of Plays and Original Character Sketches.

PEOPLE'S PAL., The, Mile End Rd. Adv. 2777.
Mon., APRIL 26th, Nightly at 8, Sat., 8.15. Late mat., Sat., at 5 o'c. PENELOPE DUDLEY WARD in
LOVE FROM A STRANGER
by FRANK VOSPER. 9*d.* to 5*s.*

PLAYHOUSE. OVER 400 PERFS. Whi. 7774.
Evgs., 8.30 (Ex. Mon.). Mats., Wed., Th., Sat., 2.30.
NANCY PRICE in
WHITEOAKS

QUEEN'S. Ger. 4517. Tu., April 20, 8.15 (subs. 8.40).
POST ROAD
by Wilbur Daniel Steele & Norma Mitchell.
First Matinee, Saturday, April 24th, at 2.30.

ST. MARTIN'S. Tem. Bar 1443.
EVGS., 8.30. MATS., TUES. & FRI., 2.30.
SUSPECT
by Rex Judd.

SAVILLE. EVGS., 8.15. Mat., SATS., 2.30.
STANLEY LUPINO in
OVER SHE GOES
Musical Tantivy with LADDIE CLIFF.

STRAND. Tem. Bar 2660.
EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED., & SAT., 2.30.
THE SQUEAKER
EDGAR WALLACE'S BEST PLAY.

WESTMINSTER. Vic. 0283, 6/-, 3/6, 2/6 (bookable).
EVGS., 8.30. Mats., WED. & SAT., 2.30.
FLORA ROBSON in EUGENE O'NEILL'S
ANNA CHRISTIE

WHITEHALL. (Whi. 6692.) 2nd YEAR
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30. (Smoking).
ANTHONY AND ANNA.
A Comedy by ST. JOHN ERVINE.

WYNDHAM'S. Tem. 3028, 3029.
EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED. & SAT., at 2.30.
"GEORGE and MARGARET."
COMEDY by GERALD SAVORY.

PICTURE THEATRES

ACADEMY CINEMA, Oxford St. Ger. 2981.
WILLY FORST'S Great Dramatic Triumph,
BURGTHEATER (U).
With WARNER KRAUSS, OLGA TSCHECHOWA, HANS MOSER.

EVERYMAN (Opp. Hampstead Tube Stn.) Ham. 2285.
MONDAY, 19th APRIL, for THREE DAYS,
CONRAD VEIDT in **I WAS A SPY** (A.)
THURSDAY, 22nd APRIL, for FOUR DAYS,
Robert FLAHERTY'S Classic **MAN OF ARAN** (U.)

RESTAURANTS

AH well, if you've not been to RULES you have missed a lot in life . . . Maiden Lane (Covent Garden). Lunch, Dinner, or late Supper (licensed till midnight). Est. 1780.

THIS paper may be read in "The Book" RESTAURANT and WINE DIVE facing the British Museum, also subscriptions received.

FOR THE TABLE

COMING to EDINBURGH? MACKIE'S serve excellent meals in pleasant rooms at 108 Princes Street. Opposite the Castle.

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SATURDAY, April 17th, SUFFOLK GALLERIES, Haymarket. DANCE AND CABARET. KARI KARI and HIS TROUPE in African Tribal Dances. Tom-Toms, Lure of the Jungle, Witch Doctor, Fire-eating and Prayer dances, etc. RUSSIAN BUFFET. Admission 2*s.* 6*d.* "Russia To-day" Socials Sec., Friendship House, Little James Street, W.C.1.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

THE GOLD SCARE—MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND BRITISH GOLD POLICY —BASE METAL SHARES—GESTETNER

No one has yet discovered exactly how the great gold scare originated. Probably some expert from the American Treasury, discussing with Mr. Roosevelt the ways and means of stopping an inflation without dear money, had mentioned putting gold back into the dollar. Probably this conversation had been reported by an American visitor in London to the London house of an American bank which, on the strength of this report, decided to refuse more Russian gold for consignment to the United States. Something of the sort caused the bullion market to become acutely conscious of the fact that the United States are on what is called a twenty-four hours' gold standard. Actually the American Treasury can refuse to accept gold, if it gives a day's notice of its refusal, or it can increase the handling charges, and the President has power to vary the gold content of the dollar between 50 cents and 60 cents gold, that is, to vary the price of gold between $41.34 and $34.44 per ounce (the present price being $35). The reassuring point is that Mr. Roosevelt could not put more than one-quarter of a grain of gold back into the dollar without fresh legislation*—and it is unthinkable that Congress would pass such deflationary legislation while no evidence existed of an actual inflation. It is, of course, unfortunate that America should have to go on accumulating gold until the day of final stabilisation, but it should rejoice that its gold purchases are preventing the dollar from appreciating (thus helping American exporters). In the meantime it can sterilise its gold imports so that foreign gold does not become the basis of a credit inflation.

* * *

If the American Congress were ever insane enough to put more gold back into the dollar except as a last resort to combat a dangerous price inflation, Great Britain would be free to alter the dollar-sterling rate of exchange, that is, to keep sterling on a gold basis of 140*s.* to the ounce. In answering a question from Mr. Robert Boothby in the House of Commons, this week, who asked for "an assurance that the Government had no intention of taking action to check the rise in commodity prices by raising the price of sterling in terms of gold," Mr. Chamberlain said that the British Government was fully alive to the undesirability of interfering with the flow of business towards recovery. That implied that Mr. Chamberlain was quite satisfied that the present degree of depreciation of sterling in terms of gold had been, and was continuing to be, beneficial. How this country could carry its present burden of debt without the rise in commodity prices which has followed upon currency depreciation it is difficult to see. Gold shareholders should, therefore, not be alarmed by rumours of currency insanity in Washington, but should keep their eyes fixed on the British Government's currency policy and on the British price level. Unless and until a dangerous price inflation has developed in Great Britain there is no risk of the British Government following the American in any such violent measure of deflation as putting gold back into the currency. Professor Cassel, of course, is arguing that there is already a measure of price inflation in Great Britain, because he wants to divorce the Swedish crown from sterling, but so far he has convinced no one in his own country or in ours. The price level should, of course, resume its upward trend after the recent reaction, and as long as the rise is associated with a rise in wages and an increase in output, there is no reason to fear a price inflation or to talk of the necessity for deflation.

* * *

If this view of the gold scare is correct, we would regard the recent shake-out in the commodity markets as one of the normal reactions which periodically occur in an upward price movement. It was, however, a major reaction, as the following table will show:

Commodity.	Highest, 1937.	Present Price.
Copper .. .. per ton	£78	£63⅛
Tin .. .. .. „	£312	£273¼
Lead .. .. „	£36	£25¾
Spelter .. .. „	£36⅞	£25 15/16
Rubber .. .. per lb.	1/1½	11 7/16d.

Generally speaking, the base metal shares had never risen sufficiently to discount earnings at the highest prices touched in the commodity markets. It is therefore interesting to estimate the earnings of the metal shares at current metal prices. Taking lead and zinc at an average price of £25 per ton and silver at 1*s.* 9*d.* per oz., the lead-zinc shares now offer the following earnings yields:

	Highest Price, 1937.	Present Price.	Estimated Earnings %	Gross Yield % on Estimated Earnings.*
Trepca 5/-	43/-	36/6	90	12.33
Zinc Corporation 10/-	7 7/32	5¾	160	15.73
North Broken Hill, 5/-	75/7½	3	140	13.19
Broken Hill South, 5/-	47/6	2	95	13.40

* In each case, with the exception of Trepca, British Tax is deducted at around 2/9 in the £.

* * *

The estimates of earnings for the copper shares are calculated on a price of £60 for the metal:

	Highest 1937.	Present Price.	Est. Output at.	Est. Earnings %	Gross Yield %
Roan Antelope 5/-	89/-	72/-	86,000 tons	190	13.2
			100,000 „	235	16.3
Rhodesian Selection Trust 5/-	46/-	25/6	50,000 „	40	7.8
			80,000 „	70	13.7
Rhokana £1	18⅝	15½	72,000 „	145	9.5
			90,000 „	170	11.1
Rhodesian Anglo-American 10/-	42/6	36/-	(*a*)	41	11.4
			(*b*)	48	13.3

(*a*) With Rhokana output at 72,000 tons.
(*b*) With Rhokana output at 90,000 tons.

The Roan production is not yet up to 86,000 tons, but is expected to attain this rate shortly. It could probably increase production to 100,000 tons without requiring more capital. Rhodesian Selection Trust owns 64 per cent. of Mufulira, which may not be producing at more than 50,000 tons a year at the present time but could increase its output to 80,000 tons a year. Rhokana is producing from its N'Kana properties, owns 32.3 per cent. of Mufulira and is now floating N'Changa. Rhodesian Anglo-American owns about 54 per cent. of Rhokana and it will be found that one "Rho-Anglo" share is equivalent to a little over ⅛ Rhokana share and ⅛ N'Changa (the latter being £1 shares now quoted at 1⅜ premium). In buying these base metal shares the speculator is necessarily taking the view that metal prices will not

* At the old parity gold was valued at $20.67 per fine ounce, based on the dollar of 25.8 grains of fine gold. On Januuary 31, 1934, the President proclaimed the U.S. gold dollar to be 15.238 grains of fine gold. He has powers to make it 15.485 grains or 12.9 grains of gold.

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suffer a further reaction. While lead and zinc seem fairly valued at current prices there is some uncertainty about copper.

* * *

The surtax payer should buy the ordinary shares of Gestetner. This company manufactures duplicating and office printing machines, and under the able management of Mr. S. Gestetner has made a market for its products throughout the world. The export trade is now expanding and the domestic trade booming. The balance sheet is very conservative. Patents, goodwill and leasehold premises are entered at nominal values and fixed assets are conservatively written down. In the year ending August 31st, 1936, 51.4 per cent. was earned on the ordinary capital and 35 per cent. paid. In the current year there is good reason to believe that profits will show a further increase. The attraction to the surtax payer is that the directors generally declare a capital bonus with the final dividend. Last year the capital bonus was 12½ per cent. Last year's earnings were equivalent on the increased capital to 45.7 per cent. There is, therefore, no reason why the dividend should not be maintained at 35 per cent. this year (the interim has actually been increased from 15 per cent. to 17½ per cent. on the increased capital), and a further capital bonus of 12½ per cent. declared with the final dividend. At the present price of 47*s*. 6*d*. the ordinary shares return a yield of £3 13*s*. 9*d*. per cent. on estimated dividends of 35 per cent., ignoring the capital bonus.

Company Meeting

NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY

MR. ERNEST HICKS' ADDRESS.

THE one hundred and twenty ninth Annual General Meeting of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society was held on April 13th at Norwich.

Mr. Ernest Hicks (the President) said that 1936 had been described as an eventful year, and when one recalled that it witnessed the lamentable death of a British monarch, as well as other Constitutional changes later, that it was responsible for an African campaign as well as a civil war, that it produced a currency crisis which terminated in the devaluation of the French franc, and further that it was overshadowed throughout its 12 months by disquieting developments in international politics, one was not inclined to find any serious fault with this description. The past year had also had other claims to distinction; generally, 1936 would long be remembered for its marked improvement amongst industrial and commercial activities, in which the business of life insurance prominently figured. It must be remembered that improving trade had brought to light a number of employees insurance and pension schemes which had been previously held in abeyance, and on balance, new insurances completed in most cases showed an increase over the corresponding totals of the previous year. Their own production amounted to £11,090,783, after deduction of re-insurances, being an increase of £303,193. The total premium income was £79,844 higher at £4,235,021, while interest, dividends, etc., at £1,850,831, showed an advance of £39,157. The net rate of interest, however, was £4 7s. 3d. per cent., resulting in a reduction of 2s. 11d. per cent. on the rate earned in 1935.

Total claims under policies amounted to nearly 2½ millions, of which roughly 1½ millions became due under maturing contracts, and the other million arose by reason of death. Under both headings payments were rather ligher than last year. Sums paid in respect of surrendered policies showed a contraction of £51,000, but bonuses taken in cash or applied in reduction of premiums had increased by £168,000, which was not unnatural in view of the large profits allocated to participating policy-holders in respect of the quinquennium ending December, 1935, which had a cash value of approximately £5,000,000.

The report was unanimously adopted.

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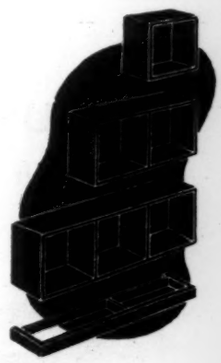

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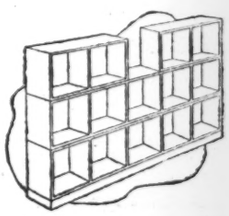

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